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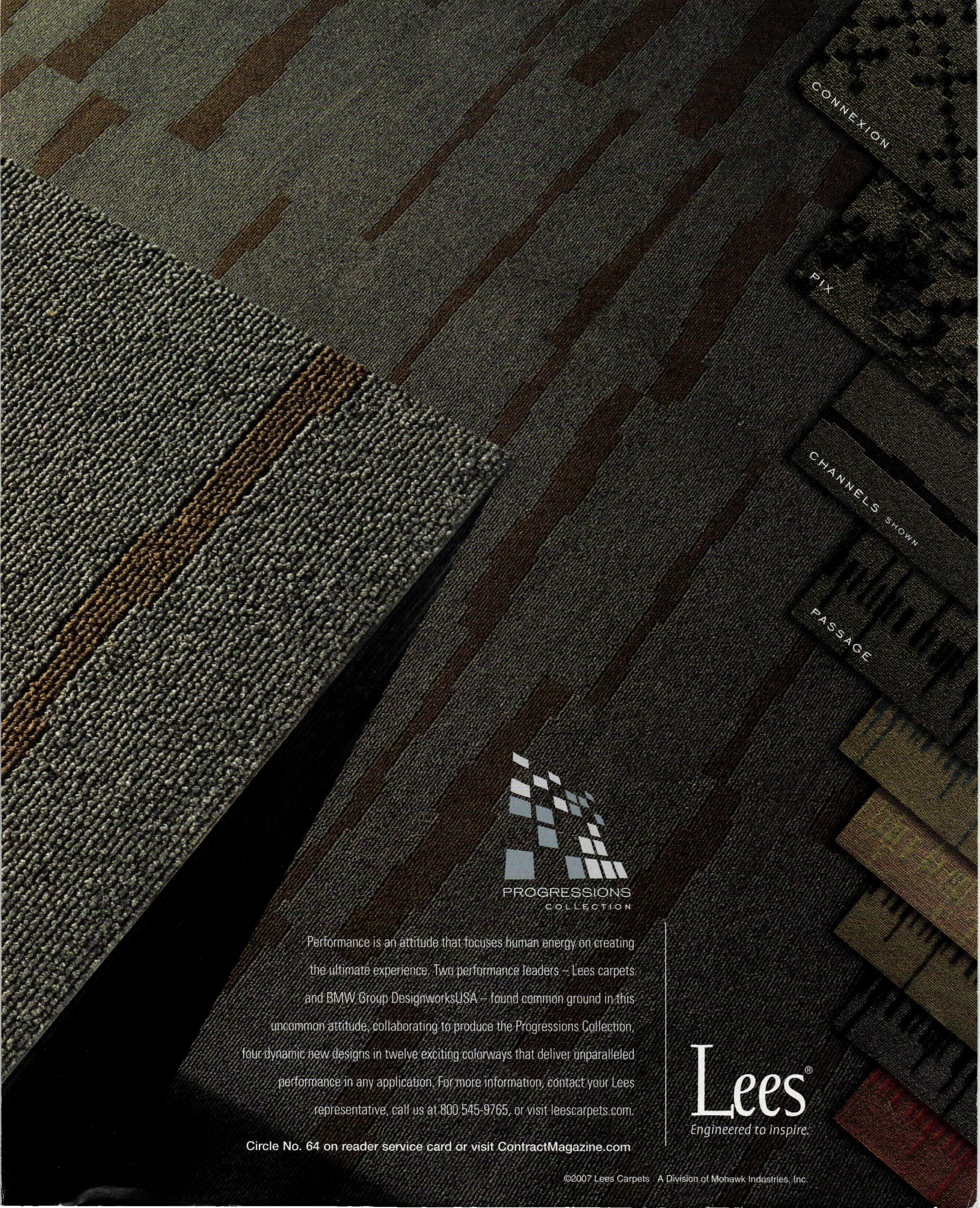
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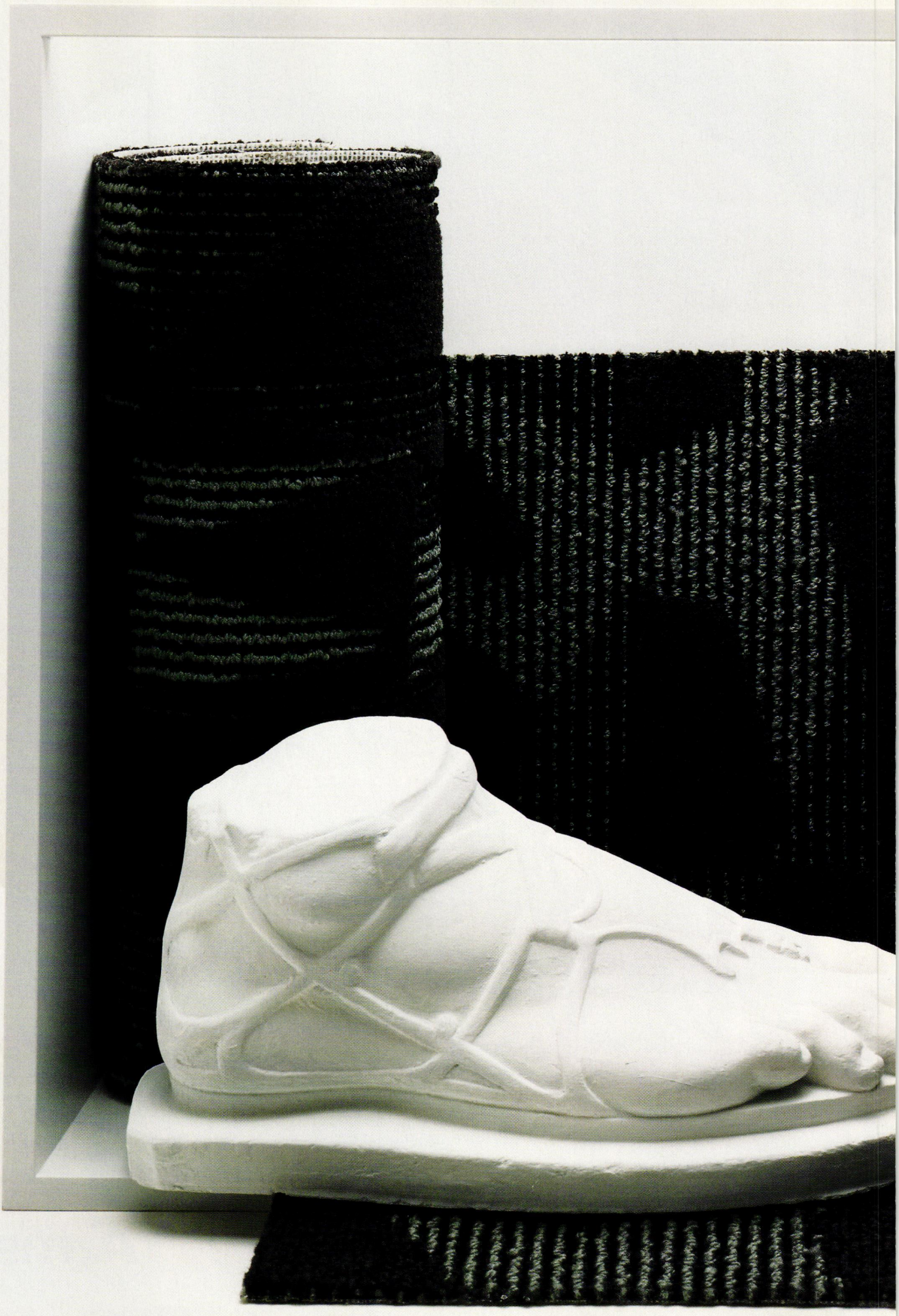

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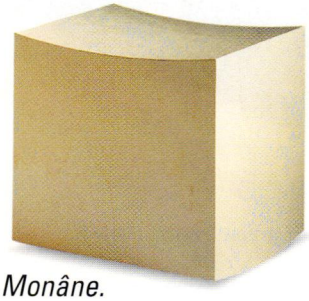

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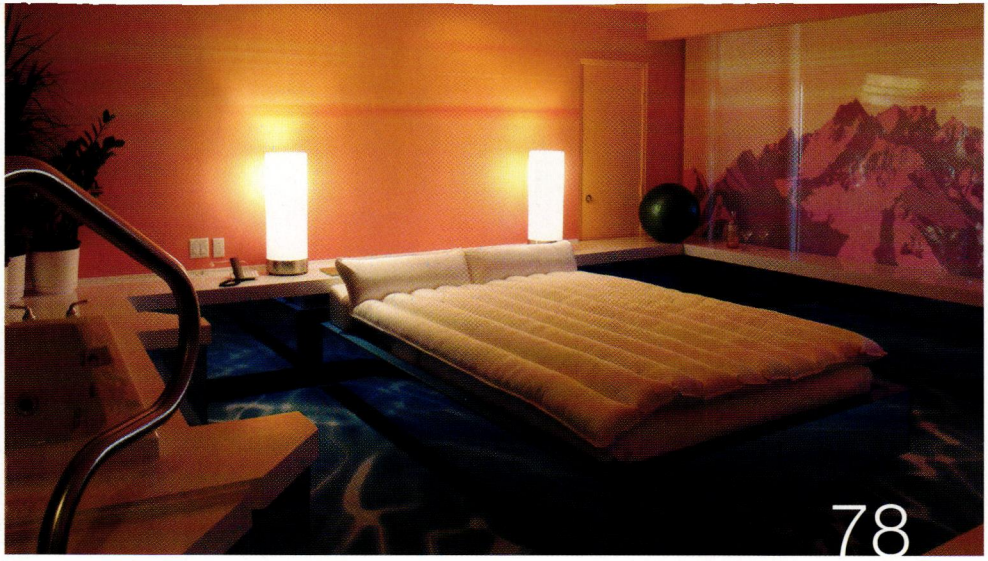
contents



focus

50 **The Working Chair**
Today's ergonomic seats are so inherently functional that they work as hard as the users who occupy them

54 **On the Horizon**
Knoll's flat line finishing capabilities and its keen attention to detail put the Graham Collection in a league of its own

56 **Karma Chameleon**
Patty Madden's revolutionary Flip collection changes colors in a flash, promising positive results for manufacturer Luxe Surfaces

material

58 **Older is Better**
At 40 years old, Corian® is far from over the hill

green

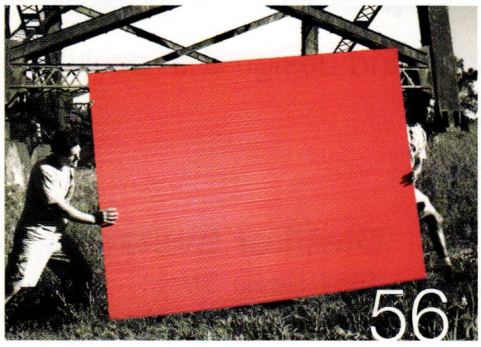
60 **Re-materializing**
Like shopping at a used clothing store, reusing materials requires an open mind and desire to work off of what you find

essay

62 **Creative Shanghai**
Through targeted preservation and redevelopment efforts, architecture, history, and art combine to support the local economy in China's most creative city

intro

69 **Something Old, Something New**
Adaptive reuse is the way to go



design

72 **Live and Learn**
Bosch & Fjord's redesign of the Ordrup School in Gentofte, Denmark, serves as a learning tool for all involved

78 **Absolut Vegas**
Absolut Spirits, *Esquire*, Caesars Palace, and Rockwell Group team up to create a suite deal on the Las Vegas strip

84 **Sexy Makes a Comeback**
With a racy design set within a nouveau San Diego neighborhood, The Keating Hotel by Italy's Pininfarina Extra brings a welcome, highly personalized edge to guest service

90 **Fresh and Modern**
The Designer Collections floor and the Personal Shopping Suites at Holt Renfrew in Toronto get a welcome update, thanks to a design by burdifilek

96 **Dine by the Sword**
Dodd Mitchell Design brings unconventional style to a hot new New York City restaurant

100 **The Art of Banking**
Set in Chicago's historic Tree Studios, Metropolitan Capital Bank brings custom banking to its clients with a redesign by OWP/P creates a custom redesign for a suffering interior

practice

164 **A Case for Cooperation**
How one owner plus four architects and one project can equal success

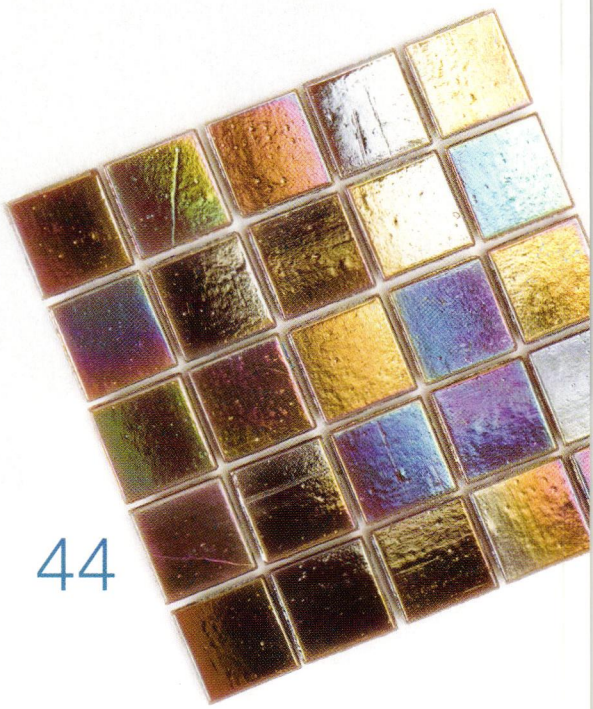
process

166 **Protecting Your Design Intent**
Specifications ensure that a project's design integrity and intent are secured

departments

20 editorial
24 industry
44 resources
48 resources: Q&A
105 exhibition: neocon® 2007
162 designers rate: stacking chairs
168 critique
170 credits
173 ad index
174 perspectives

cover: Herman Miller, Brazo, Best of NeoCon® Best of Competition winner. Photo by Chun Lai.



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Anatomy of a Green Design Project

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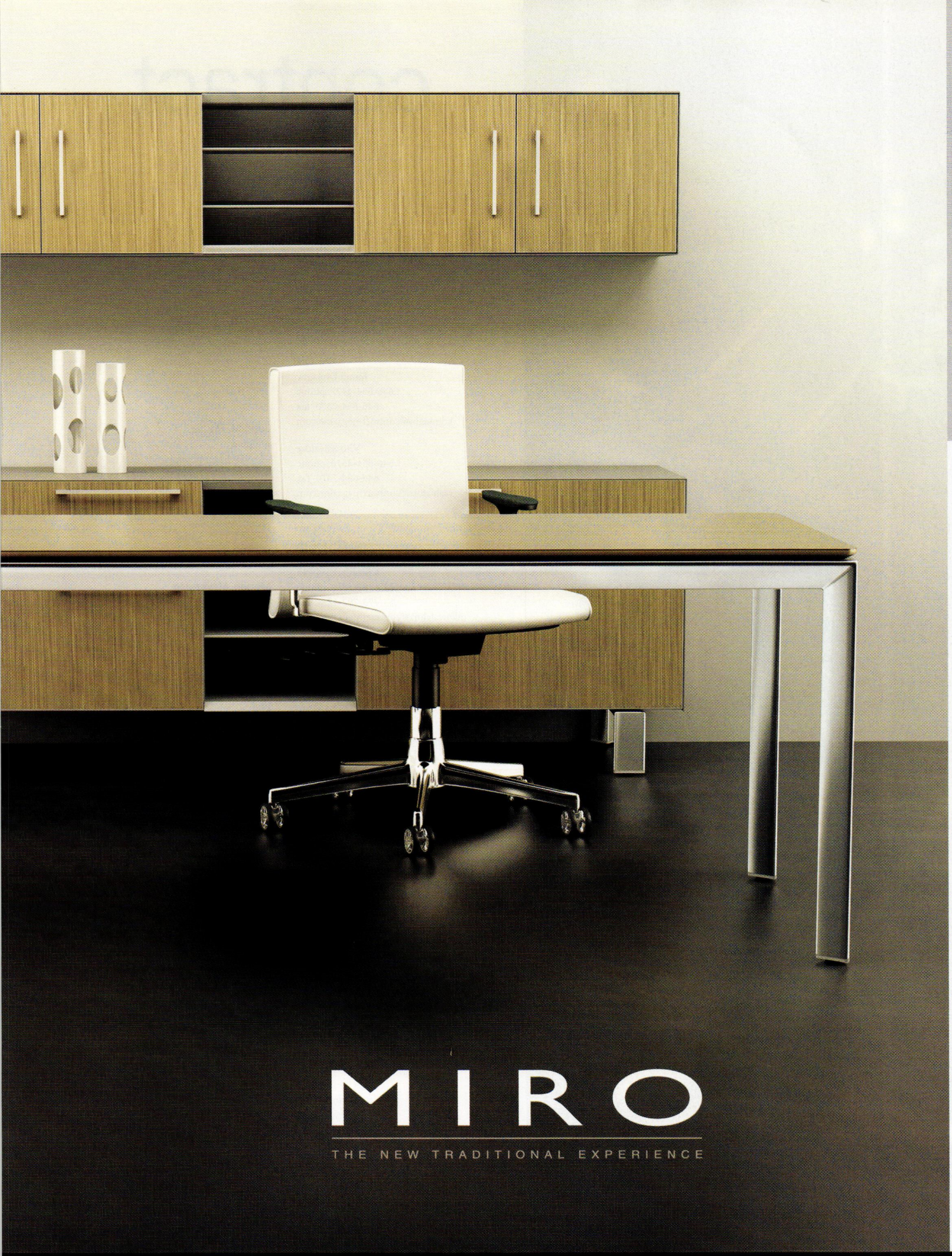

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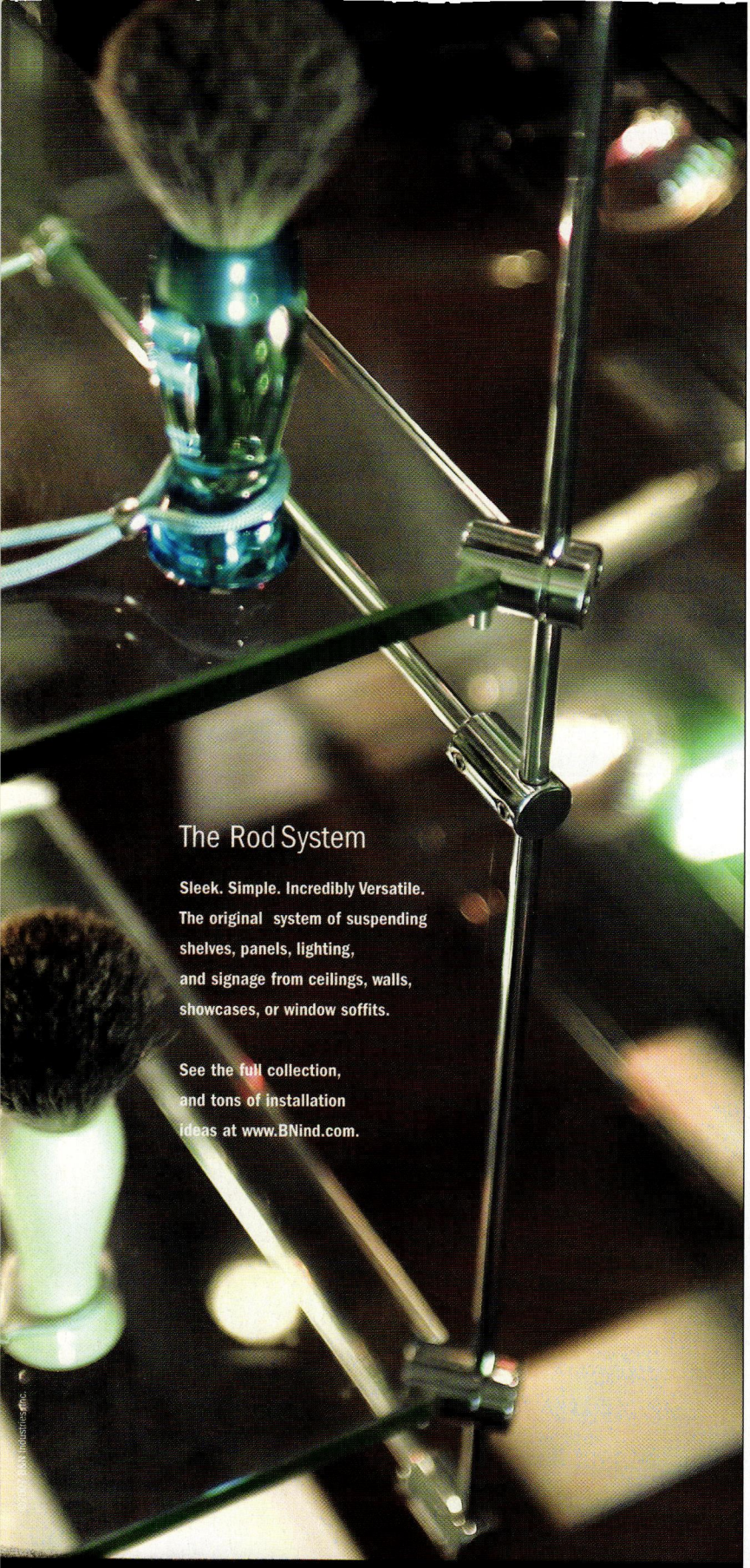

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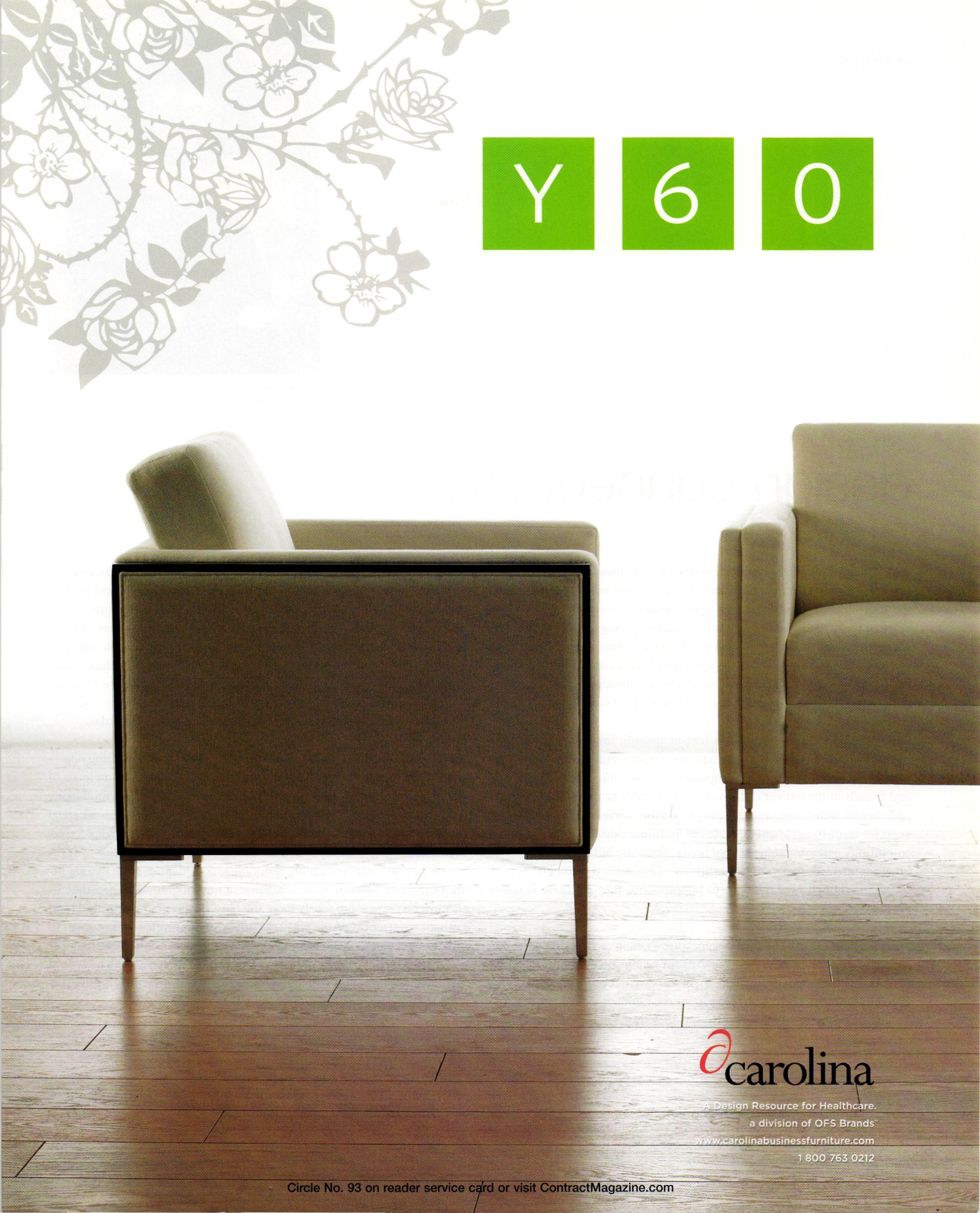

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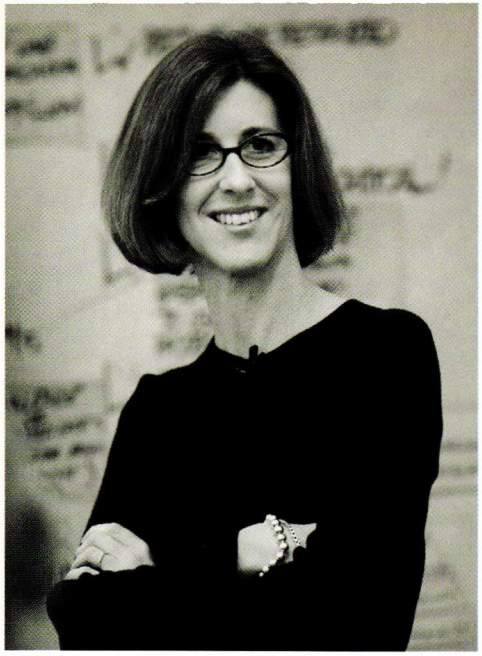

Jennifer Thiele Busch
Editor in Chief

design connections

In designer Antonio Larosa's guest critique (p. 168) about a phenomenon he refers to as "the iPodization of society," he laments the increasing isolation of the individual in society and calls upon designers to reverse the trend by creating more spaces and products that will bring people together. While I acknowledge the problem—haven't we all sent an e-mail to a coworker who sits only a few feet away?—and can appreciate Larosa's sentiments, I actually think that interior designers and architects are already well ahead of the curve when it comes to combating this looming sense of isolation.

Surely the corporate workplace is forever moving toward a more team-based planning strategy, with the balance of space shifting from personal to shared; hospitals routinely emphasize the accommodation of family and friends in the patient's physical space in order to promote emotional and mental well-being; and education facilities increasingly incorporate areas for team-based learning, as well as multifunction spaces that support community gatherings after school hours. These are but a few examples of how commercial design is seriously trending toward bringing people together—though how they opt to interact once they get there is still a personal choice.

What's happening in residential design, however, is an entirely different matter. The new construction trend toward sprawling square footage for two parents (maybe), some kids, and a pet or two is both astonishing and appalling and presents a bleak scenario for the future of the American family. I like being on top of my kids. That way they always know I'm watching…

Larosa also talks about design's ability (or responsibility?) to evoke an emotional response that gets people engaged with one another, and on this point I couldn't agree with him more. I love the simple example of his impromptu conversation outside Gehry's EMP project. Whether you like edgy, experimental design or hate it, it can certainly create a rich and spirited dialogue. Next month's issue of *Contract* will feature another such provocative project—Steven Holl's addition to the Nelson Atkins Museum in Kansas City, Mo.—which sparked an initial public outcry as it rose from the ground and once finished, has commanded universal accolades.

This act of transforming something old and familiar into something new—also known as renovation, restoration, and adaptive reuse—is the focus of this month's issue of *Contract*, and these are perhaps the most emotionally evocative and dialogue-provoking project types known to the commercial design industry. The effects of adding nostalgia, genuine historical value, and/or community identification to the natural human tendency to resist change can turn any renovation, restoration, and adaptive reuse of a significant site into a public relations challenge, if not a nightmare, where designers must be prepared to satisfy more than just the programmatic needs and aesthetic preferences of the client, as public opinion often looms large. In these project types, design must—and inevitably does—foster communication, between the designer and client, between the design and its users, and the public at large, and certainly between past and present. And like any good relationship, the dialogue creates a better solution. ◘

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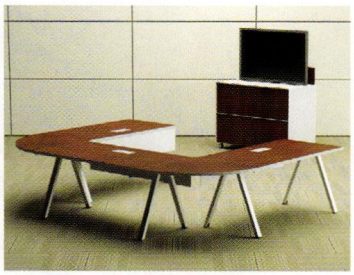

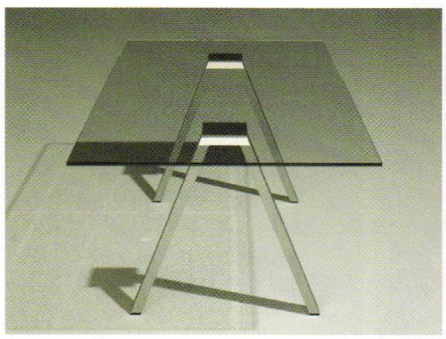

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BMW Welt double cone in Munich, designed by Coop Himmelb(l)au. Photo © BMW AG.

What a Wonderful World

Munich—At the birthplace of the BMW brand, the luxury car manufacturer will open BMW Welt (translating to English as "BMW World") in October on the Munich campus that also contains BMW's world headquarters and museum. Vienna-based architecture firm Coop Himmelb(l)au designed the centerpiece of BMW Welt, a striking piece of architecture with a unique double-cone structure topped by a 16,5000 sq. m. cloud roof, an environmental concept that integrates high-tech and low-tech elements in an energy-efficient building. An architectural feat, the double cone and roof structure is supported by just 11 pendulums to create a slim, sleek profile.

"Architecture must burn, it must agitate, even if it destroys something in the process," Wolf Prix, founder of Coop Himmelb(l)au, says when discussing how his firm's designs test the limits of architecture. "We sought to deliver a special experience to customers, it's the central point of communication of the brand," he continues. "They're coming here to see where BMW is built and to celebrate the brand; this can only be delivered within outstanding architecture. Visionary architecture is an image of the changing character of the BMW brand."

BMW Welt serves as the company's public face, as it's intended to offer a unique personal experience for customers, with a new vehicle delivery center that will accommodate 45,000 vehicles annually (an average of 170 per day); 800,000 visitors a year are anticipated. The building's unique delivery area allows customers to drive their new car or motorcycle down a spiral ramp for an enhanced purchasing experience. With the hall containing the showroom and delivery center at its heart, BMW Welt also includes three restaurants and a state-of-the-art Event Forum that accommodates 800 people for exhibitions, conferences, and seminars, and can display a car on the auditorium stage.

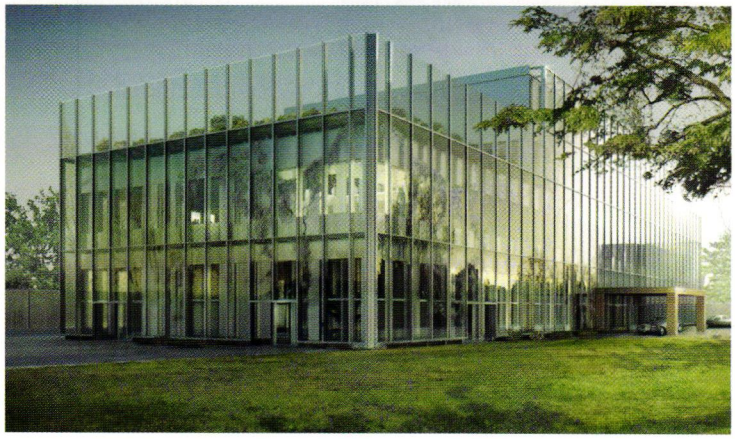
"BMW asked for a place to deliver cars, and we worked with them point by point to create a mixture of marketplace and theater," Prix explains, adding, "Without a computer, it would have been impossible to build this building. Much like a car, we went from a model to fruition."

Diplomatic Design

London—British firm Tony Fretton Architects has received planning permission for a new £12 million scheme for the British Embassy in Warsaw, Poland. Commissioned by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, the 4,300-sq.-m (46,285 sq. ft.) building is due to be complete by 2009.

The building is arranged over three floors, served by a central elevator core and stairs. The ground floor is reserved for public activities and features a large exhibition space with an adjoining restaurant, and a consular and visa section with a separate entrance. The second floor is dedicated entirely to ambassadorial work and offers a 360-degree panoramic view of the city. The floor in between contains an open plan workspace for non-public activities or ambassadorial work.

Among the innovative features: The three sides of the building that face the sun are enclosed by a double façade. During Poland's harsh winters, the gap between the two skins provides a thermal buffer, while in the summer it serves as a thermal chimney, drawing warm air from the inner façade. The solution addresses the tight security requirements of the brief without compromising the high level of fenestration.



The British Embassy in Warsaw, Poland, by Tony Fretton Architects

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Kendall College of Art and Design Presents "Big D 2007" at NeoCon®

In 2005, Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University ventured into new territory with its annual class held in Chicago during NeoCon®. The new direction took a humanistic approach to the problem solving nature of the design process. Utilizing the successes of the 2005 and 2006 programs as a guide, Kendall planned a more intense agenda for the nearly 100 students registered for the NeoCon® '07 class, and directed the first program in their "Big D" (as in Big Design) series. "Big D" agendas in future classes will continue to provide a new standard of presentations and opportunities for students at NeoCon®.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that the importance of design has empowered the professional community to have an even greater impact on the world at large. Now, more than ever before, creativity is significant in strategic thinking. There is also great concern about shaping the world in a way that is sensitive and responsible. Design is a big deal, and to celebrate, Kendall's NeoCon® '07 class, named "Big D 2007", explored multiple avenues of architecture, landscape, interiors, graphics, product and creative business design.

"Beyond Form and Function: Meeting Social Responsibility Through Design" was an inspiring program that aimed to influence the long-term future of the class. In light of the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina in 2006, the "social responsibility" theme resonated strongly. In a timely manner, the 2006 Kendall College of Art and Design program focused on a group of professionals and their organizations that are committed to creating products and processes that impact not only individuals in the micro sense, but are profound in the macro sense.

On Sunday June 10, Kendall College of Art and Design kicked off "Big 'D' 2007" with a reception sponsored by Haworth at the Chicago Cultural Center. A gem of history and architecture, the Center provided a world-class view of Millennium Park with a docent from the Chicago Architecture Foundation giving the crowd a well-honed overview of the Park from conception to completion. That group included Kendall alumni, such as Jerryl Habegger, who co-authored *Sourcebook of Modern Furniture*, and Michael Syrjanen, who established himself in Chicago successfully designing residential projects and also as a tireless activist.

continued on page 30

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Monday kicked off NeoCon®, and Tim Brown of IDEO started Tuesday morning with his keynote "Innovation Through Design Thinking," an eye-opening look at how designers have a unique way of solving problems and how 'design thinking' paves a way to create the future. At the Gleacher Center at the University of Chicago, a lineup of professionals gave some candid advice and insight into the bigger world of design. Cindy Coleman brought her wealth of experience to share with the students, covering the spectrum from projects to portfolios and the process of planning a career. Mathew Berman and Andrew Kotchen, co-founders of "workshop/apd" then led the audience through their experience of designing residential projects in the most extreme environments. Feeling a need to support the repair of the devastation of New Orleans firsthand, Berman and Kotchen took action by submitting to the Global Green Design Competition for New Orleans—and developing a solution for affordable, well-planned housing communities for those who have lost so much. They said it changed their lives forever and sharing that experience impacted the audience. Paul Hatch, president of Teams Design in Chicago, lent perspective on the strength of the simple things in designing products. Understanding that a minor change in form can ultimately decide whether the user will be drawn to embrace an object was a powerful message.

The final day of "Big D 2007" offered great exposure for the entire student audience at NeoCon®. The multitude of Student Day activities culminated with a panel discussion back at the Gleacher Center focusing on "Integrating Social Responsibility into Professional Practice." Panel participants included Nila Leiserowitz, Gensler; Terry Guen, TGDA Landscape Architects; Stewart Cottman, Stewart Cottman Design & Board President, Project Philanthropy; and Joe Connell, The Environments Group. There was great discussion about the meaning of social responsibility, the forms it takes in both professional and personal experience and whether we (the design community) can support social transformation.

Joe Connell posed a point to consider seriously: "We need to really define what is beautiful. A coat may be exquisitely designed, with fabulous materials. But if the coat was manufactured with child labor—it no longer holds the same beauty." It reminds us that our world of visual and tactile experience is more than skin deep.

Kendall College of Art and Design is already planning the program for the class at NeoCon® '08, which will be the 12th year for this event.—**Michelle Kleyla**

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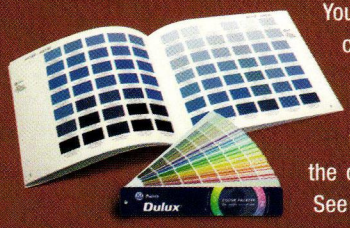

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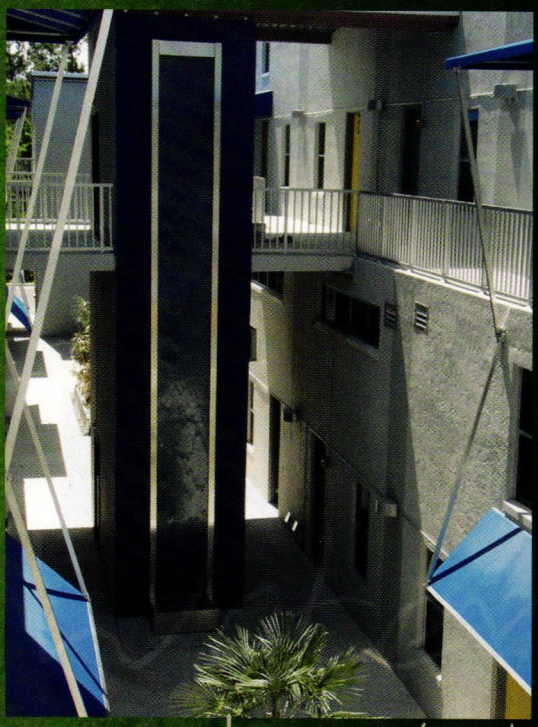

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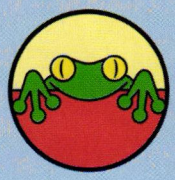

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Leeser Does More

New York—Leeser Architecture won the international competition for the World Mammoth and Permafrost Museum in the city of Yakutsk in the Republic of Sakha-Yakutia, Siberia. The Museum and Scientific Research Center and Laboratory study Siberian mammoths and permafrost, the natural habitat where their remains have been found. Leeser Architecture's pioneering design creates a shelter for life within extreme surroundings, preserving the permafrost, and fostering a comfortable learning, working, and socializing environment.

The building has been designed so the worlds of the museum and scientific research can coexist without contamination. Visitors are afforded views of restricted levels—the mechanical and research lab levels—by escalators that take them in a climate controlled tube through the building up to the museum level. Situated under the rooftop light monitors, the museum level is a large interior volume with a main hall as its nexus. It is adjacent to the reception areas, shops, auditorium, conference rooms, media library, exhibition spaces, and a café that floats within an indoor garden. The hall also provides access to underground Permafrost Galleries deep within the Tchoutchour Mouran, where visitors can view a recently discovered intact wooly mammoth.

Extensive and intensive indoor gardens promote a sense of year-round natural life even in the desolate winter months. Cascading at the perimeter of the building's interior, lush thick mats of moss and lichen, the natural insulators of permafrost ground, grow between a latticework of pathways. The gardens add color, insulation value, filter indoor air, and maintain air humidity. Visitors may view the gardens from above, while researchers may venture out to experience plant life first hand.

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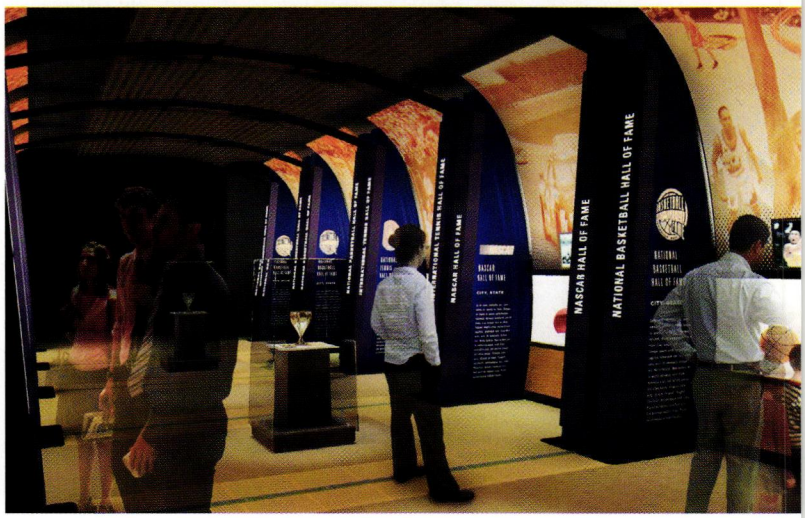
Showcasing Sports

Bethesda, Md.—Gallagher & Associates is nearing completion of the design of 22,000 sq. ft. of interactive exhibits for the new Sports Museum of America, scheduled to open in 2008 in Lower Manhattan. The exhibits will celebrate more than 150 years of sports history in the United States.

The $93-million Sports Museum of America will showcase a wide variety of sports and will include such memorabilia as college football's Heisman Trophy. The venue will include a 180-degree immersion theater; interactive sports entertainment; and café, retail, and special event space. Beyer Blinder Belle, the architect for the project, has worked closely with Gallagher & Associates since the project's inception to create a lively museum concept that offers something for everyone.

"The excitement of sports lends itself to an immersive museum experience—one that engages and entertains visitors of all ages," says Terence Healy, principal-in-charge of design for Gallagher & Associates. "The Sports Museum of America will cover all the major sports under one roof and offer many vibrant interactive and educational experiences."

Gallagher & Associates also designed the USGA's new Arnold Palmer Center for Golf History, now under construction in Far Hills, N.J.; the Carolina Basketball Museum at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill; and the U.S. Naval Academy's Lacrosse Hall of Fame in Annapolis, Md.



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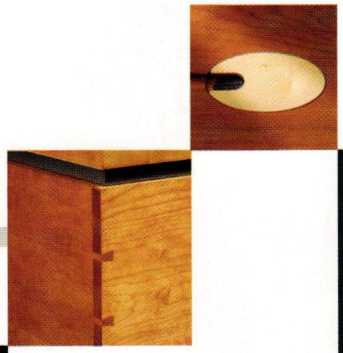

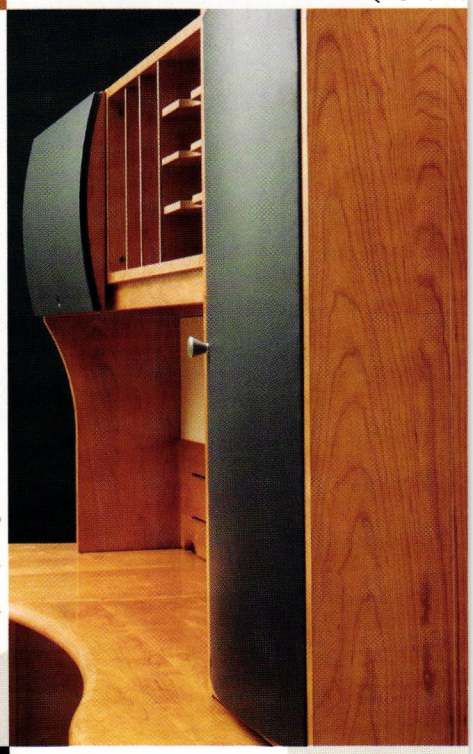

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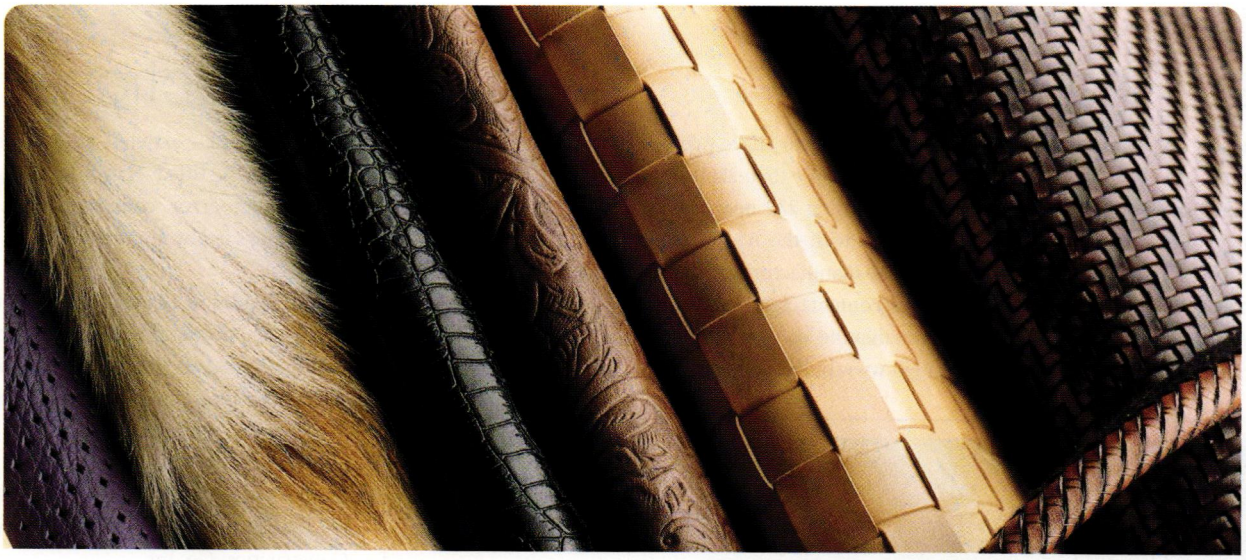

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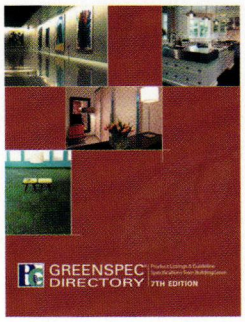
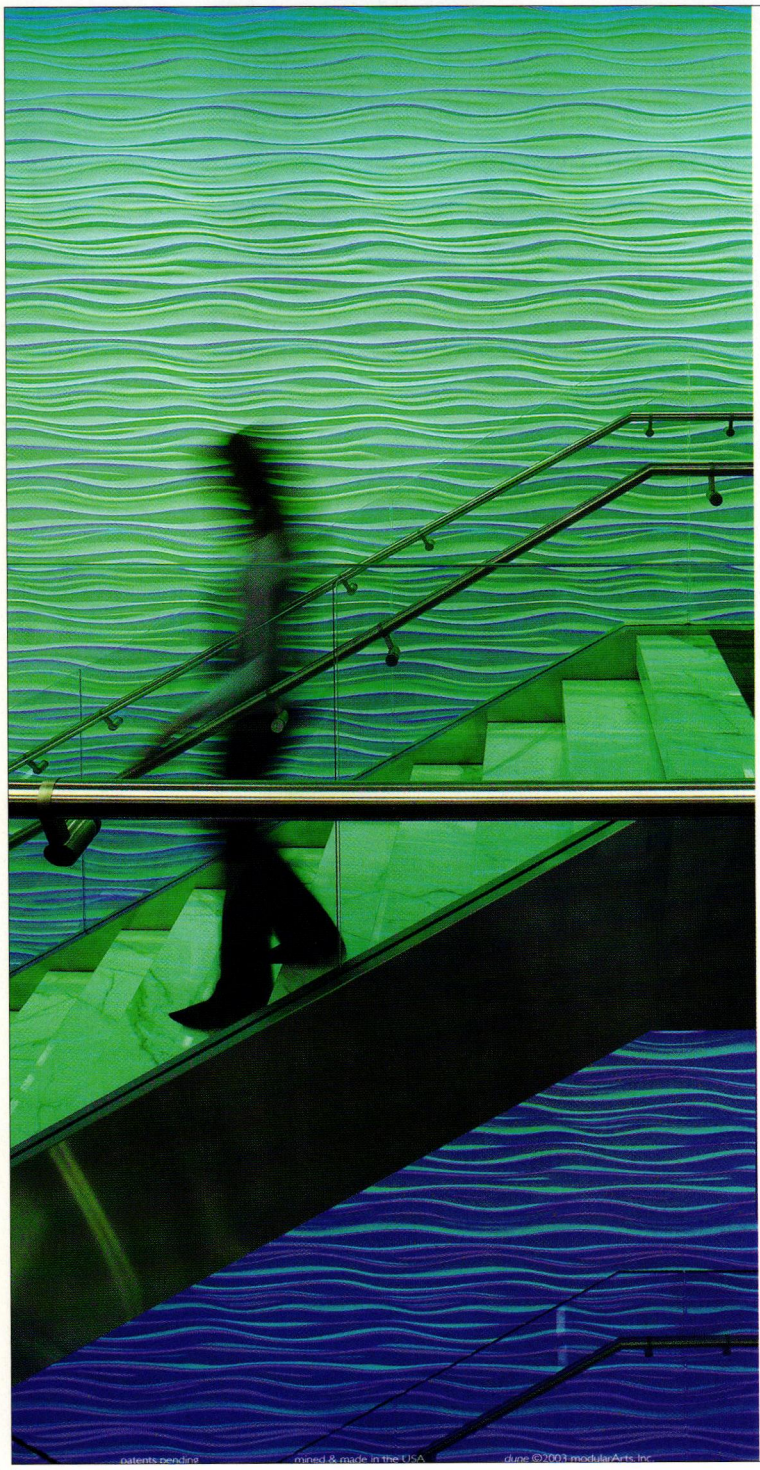
Green Reads

The publishers of the newsletter *Environmental Building News* have released the 7th edition of the GreenSpec® Directory. It includes more than 2000 environmentally preferable building product listings, including 232 new listings. An interesting point: more than 100 were removed with the new edition. Products are dropped for various reasons: because the manufacturing processes have changed (such as a reduction of recycled content), for example, or because the editors' criteria have been tightened so that the lowest-performing products no longer qualify. ($89, available through www.buildinggreen.com)





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Corrections

In the June article about the material LightBlocks®, titled "Luminous Light" (p. 82), there is an error concerning the fire rating: LightBlocks is not fire rated.

In the "Leader to Leader"' article in the July issue (p. 64) the photography for the Olympus America headquarters was incorrectly credited to Nick Webb. The photographer's correct name is Noah Webb (www.noahwebb.com).

In the Wachovia project story in the May issue (p. 154) the construction manager was Henegan Construction Co. Inc.

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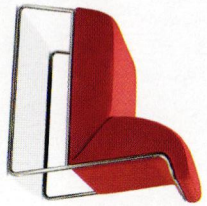

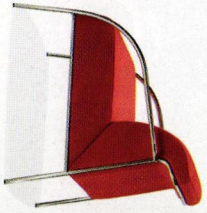

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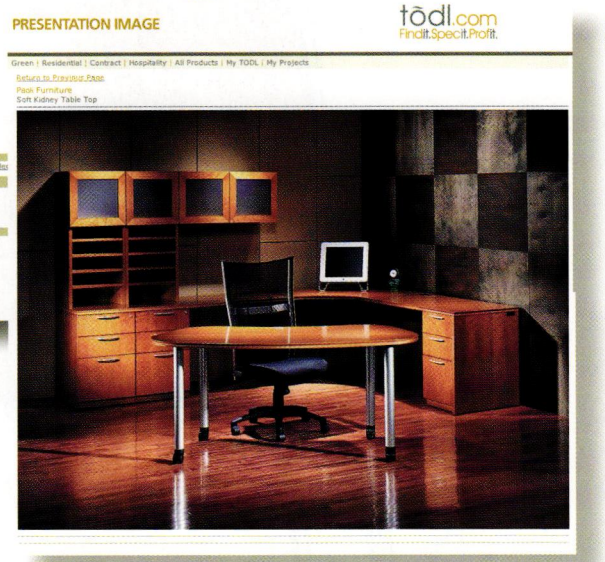

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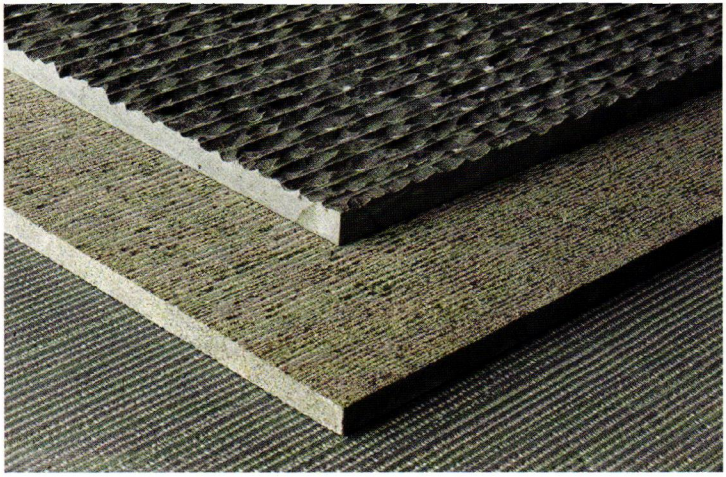

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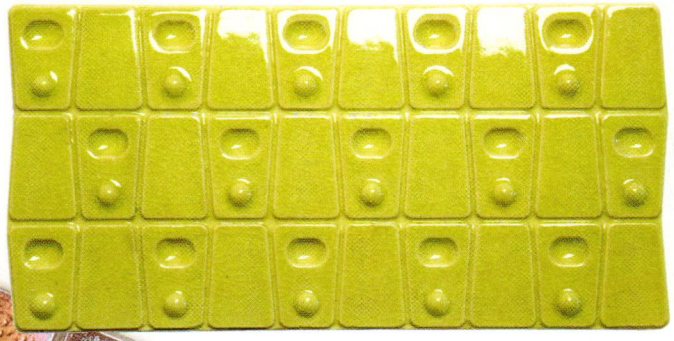
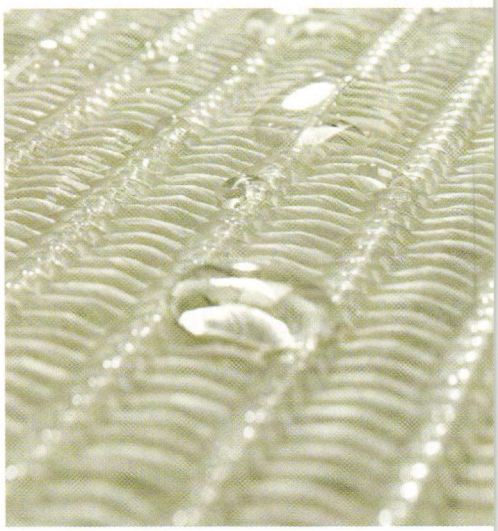


Modcraft

Handcrafted by artisans in the slip casting method, Modcraft's tiles are highly durable for kitchens and baths. They come in a variety of colors and 3-D styles that can be mixed and matched for unique effects. This is Dom, a handmade rectangular tile measuring 3 in. by 6 in. **www.mod-craft.com** Circle No. 291

Hanna Korvela Design

Made in Finland but discovered at New York's ICFF, Aqua is a woven, water-resistant carpet suitable for bathrooms, kitchens, and balconies. Woven from plastic fibers with an anti-slip backing, Aqua is produced in custom sizes and comes in seven decorative colors: white, beige, grey, brown, red, black, and turquoise. **www.hannakorveladesign.fi** Circle No. 292



Trend

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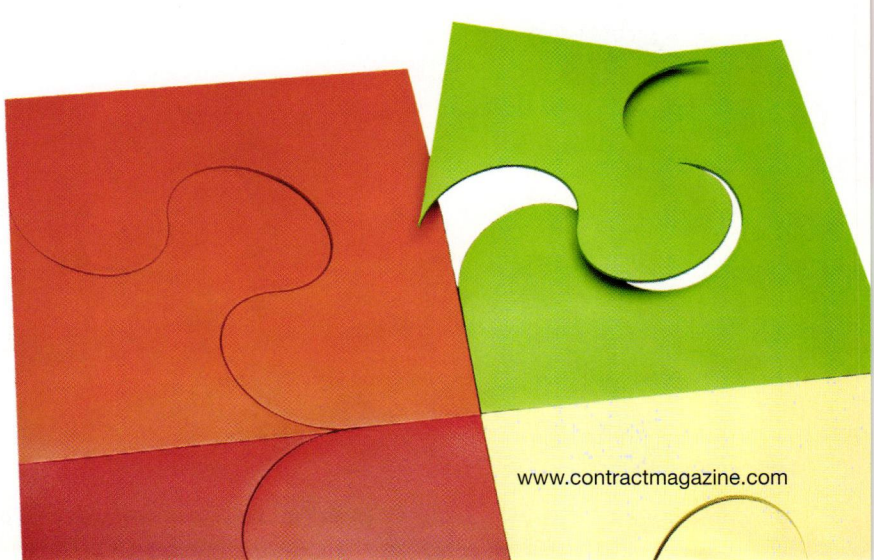

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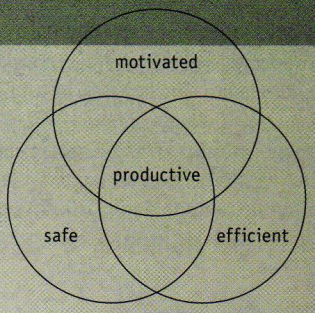

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training tables

Watson Desking

Novak Wave tables are designed specifically for technical learning environments. Their curvy shape makes for easy viewing of the instructor, the screen, and the CPU placement. This unusual shape also makes classroom configuration flexible and increases row density by rotating the angle of the user. **www.watsonfurniture.com** Circle No. 296

izzydesign

The Jack flip-top table assembles and nests in five sizes and eight color combinations. The series has standard ADA-compliant activation levers and braking casters. Single-circuit power and modesty panels can be added to any of the different sizes. Colors from the Hannah chair collection can be added for a customized look. **www.izzydesign.com** Circle No. 295

Milder Office

Milder's Work Tables are constructed from minimally processed, reinforced plywood in a variety of colors. Their many shapes and sizes will accommodate sitting or standing, working alone, or in groups. Modesty panels can be added in finishes that include cork or fabric pin-up panels and dry-erase marker surfaces. Customized options for wire management and power can be configured based on client need. **www.milderoffice.com** Circle No. 297

Davis

The Avea system of modular, free-standing training tables with fixed legs has a daisy-chain electrification system of five different units that can be connected to wire any type of configuration. A rotating electrical and data port unit, as well as a wire trough, are also included. Avea comes in many sizes with veneer or laminate tops, including an aluminum edge coated in plastic for extra protection. **www.davisfurniture.com** Circle No. 298

Vecta

Akira's many sizes, shapes, and leg positions allow for creative configurations. The rectangular T-base tables allow for seating on all four sides of the table, while the L-base models provide maximum clearance and legroom for those seated on one side. Its tops come either fixed or easily foldable with only one hand. Integrated power and data capabilities are available as an upgrade. **www.vecta.com** Circle No. 299

What shade of "joy" are you looking for? With our new Concepts in Color™ collection, you're sure to find it. Of course, if you want to create an entirely different mood—from subdued to surprising—we can help you do that, too. Now, doesn't that make you want to jump for joy? To order large size color samples and fan decks, go to sherwin-williams.com or contact your local Architectural or Designer Account Executive.

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Q: With new search engines cropping up all the time, what are some of the RDA's favorites?

A: At a recent meeting, we agreed that these eight engines are currently popular sources for general browsing or seeking unusual, one-of-a-kind, or green products. Some of these sites are meant for traditional jobs, and some focus on contemporary furniture and finishes, and some are for residential projects, while others are for commercial use, or just help us streamline our efforts. Have fun browsing:

www.1stdibs.com (decorative arts)
www.bellacor.com (residential fixtures and finishes)
www.4specs.com (all CSI manufacturers)
www.homeportfolio.com (residential fixtures and finishes)
www.stonesource.com (everything stone)
www.buildinggreen.com (environmental catalogues)
www.dwell.com/daily/blog (creative articles and fun ideas)
http://del.icio.us (for bookmarking your favorite categories)

Q: What is GreenBlue, and how does it affect contract materials?

A: The McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry, the formidable company on cradle-to-cradle products and processing, founded GreenBlue in 2002. As stated on its Web site, "GreenBlue is a nonprofit institute that stimulates the creative redesign of industry by focusing the expertise of professional communities to create practical solutions, resources, and opportunities for implementing sustainability."

In our industry, sustainable fabric is one of the key products for which GreenBlue is developing standards. Textiles are a natural place to start since they are fundamental to all industrialized economies. Association of Contract Textiles (ACT) is actively working with GreenBlue to help set up a blueprint for a Sustainable Textile Standard (STS) which simply transfers already established criteria into the world of contract fibers. It measures and develops more efficient ways to handle the safety of chemical inputs, energy and water efficiency, recycling and reclamation, and social equity for workers. GreenBlue's goal is to have all manufacturing processes and materials meet or excel their criteria in the very near future. For more information go to: www.greenblue.org and www.contract-textiles.org.

Resources Q&A is provided by Katherine Day Sutton, a member of the Resource Directors Association (RDA).

To submit a question, visit www.contractmagazine.com.

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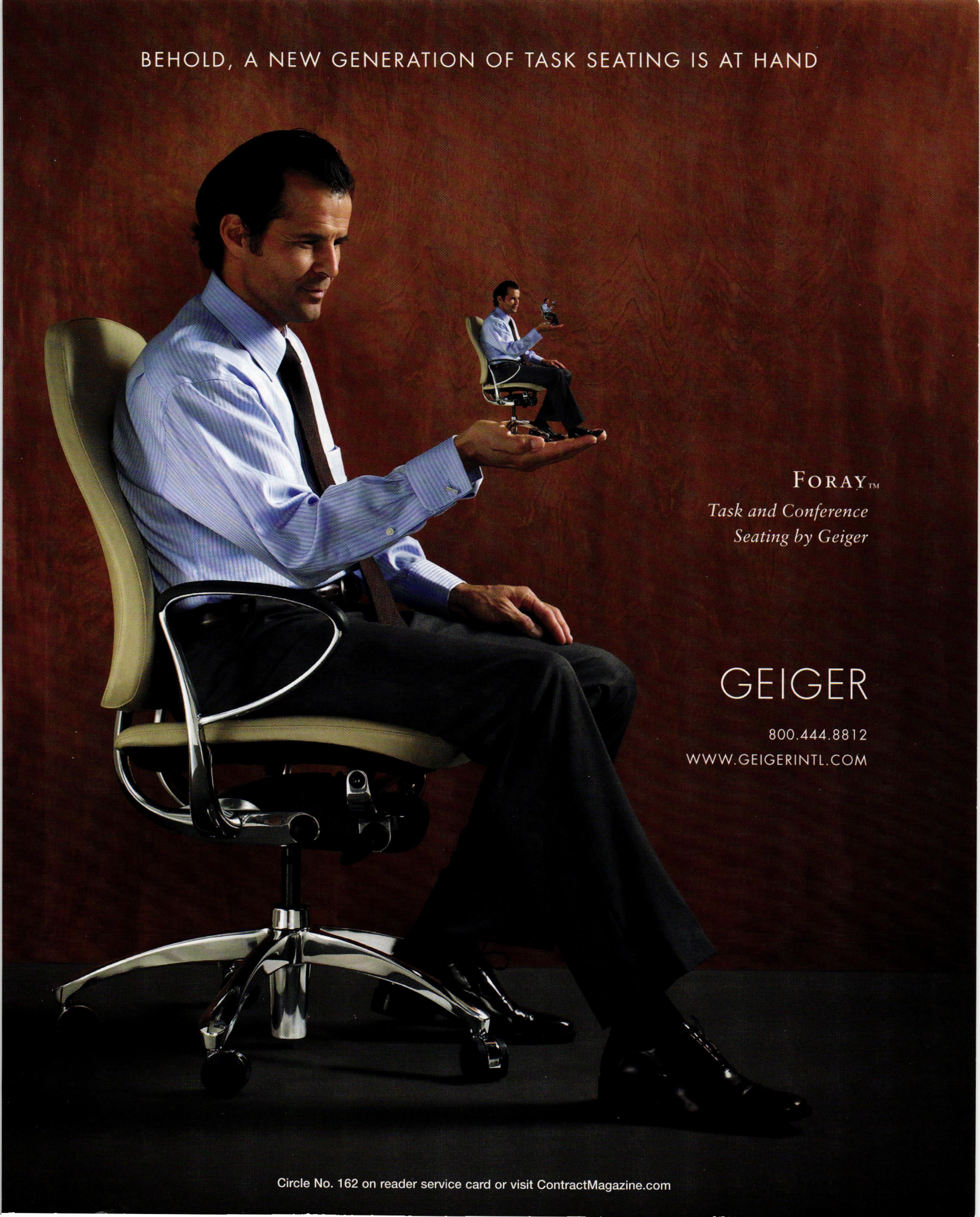
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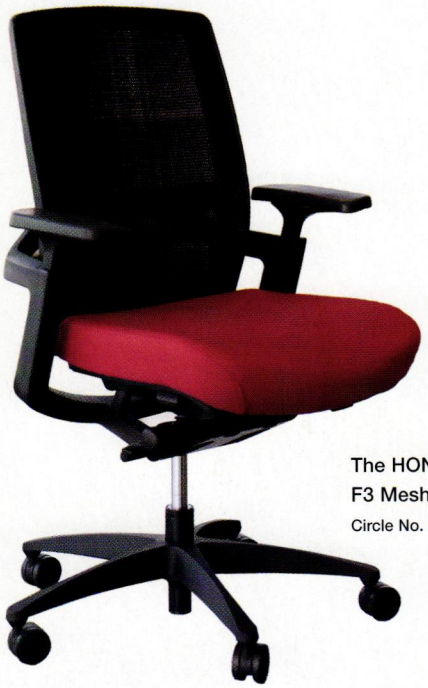
the working chair

Today's ergonomic seats are so inherently functional that they work as hard as the users who occupy them

By Danine Alati

Steelcase, Amia.
Circle No. 253



The HON Company,
F3 Mesh.
Circle No. 204

izzydesign, Hannah.
Circle No. 289

The ergonomic chair is a main character in any corporate office scene. Whether a worker perches at the edge with legs extended forward or slides to the backrest, arching backwards, the chair can make or break a day at the office. Since lack of comfort translates to lack of productivity, ergonomic seating manufacturers are challenged to provide intuitive chairs that are easy to use and accommodating to users, with a clean, pleasing aesthetic, to boot.

Bells and whistles are not necessary to impress end users. Instead, comfort and simplicity reign supreme. While adjustability is a key criterion, no one wants to read a complicated manual. Chairs with controls integrated into the bones of the structure fare as most popular. For example, The HON Company's F3 Mesh chair, designed by Conrad Marini, has its mechanicals built into its seat bottom, offering a clean line and support, and an innovative, 3-D, open-weave knit material called *ilira* stretches over the seat to enhance comfort.

One-size-fits-all seating solutions can be limiting, given the variations in users' body types and work styles; therefore, a chair that offers simple individual adjustments and/or responds intuitively is preferable. Teknion's Fitz is an all-encompassing solution of sorts. Designed by Teknion's in-house team based on the stringent international Ergonomics of Human System Interaction standards, Fitz accommodates 95 percent of the world's office population. A molded foam seat helps distribute body weight to alleviate pressure points, while the back contours to the body with lumbar and shoulder support; seat depth, tilt, arm, and headrest adjustability allows users to personalize chairs.

With a similarly innate mechanism, Steelcase's Amia task chair, designed by Thomas Overtun of IDEO, incorporates a patented Alive Seating technology, along with its LiveBack, that responds to the sitter's movements. Seat height, depth, tilt, and tension adjustments enable a user of any size to sit comfortably for hours on end.

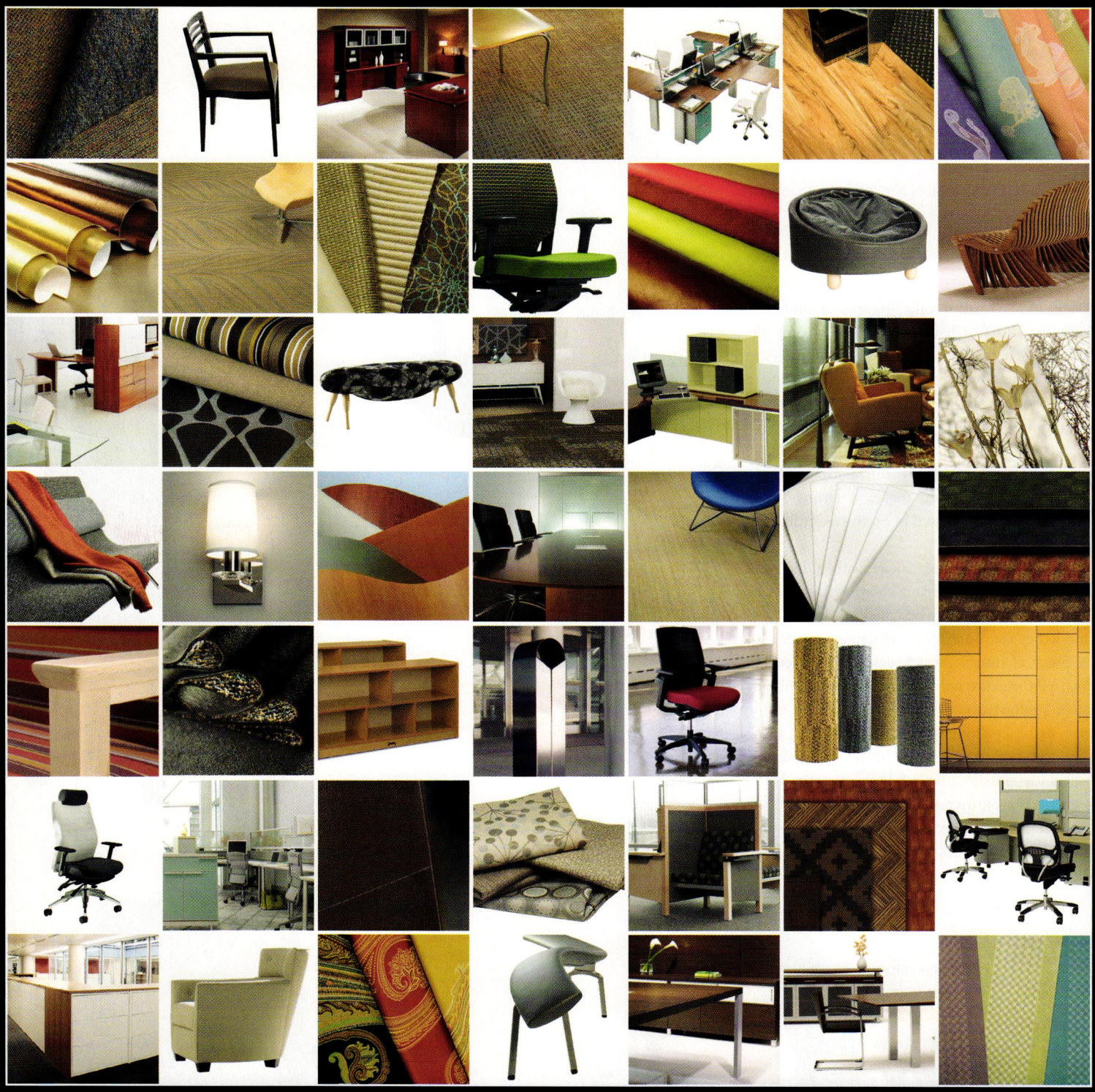
Davis offers what it calls "passive ergonomics" with the BODY Chair Series, offering only the most basic necessary personalization settings (seat and height adjustment, tension control, and a lever to lock the back in place), with the rest of the ergonomics built into the knitted back and frame to accommodate body types without additional adjustment. Designed by Burkhard Vogtherr, BODY's sleek aesthetic makes a strong visual statement that works well in executive settings.

However, not only task chairs with a high-end aesthetic like BODY strike a chord with end users. The Hannah task chair designed by Dennis Foley and Jeffrey Gershune for izzydesign is a favorite for its practical, durable, simple design, constructed of high-performance polypropelene. And as with any other product category, manufacturers are taking care to be environmentally responsible by using high recycled content and recyclable materials whenever possible. So while a one-size-fits-all scenario is a bit overambitious, manufacturers are successfully delivering users ergonomic chairs that facilitate whatever task is at hand. C

Global—The Total Office, Aspen.
Circle No. 205

Davis, Body.
Circle No. 254

Teknion, Fitz.
Circle No. 207



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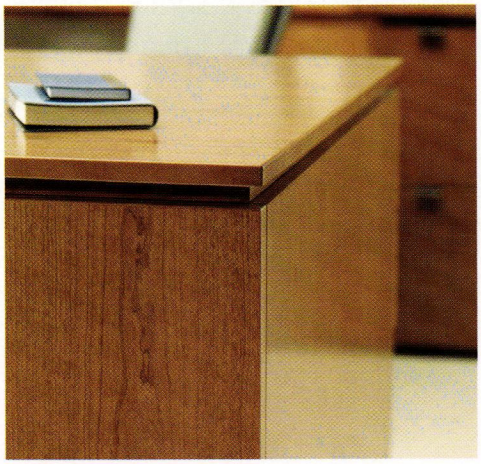
on the horizon

Knoll's flat line finishing capabilities and its keen attention to detail put the Graham Collection in a league of its own

By Jennifer Thiele Busch



Knoll's new Graham Collection of private office furniture offers the commercial design industry something that San Francisco-based designer Brian Graham believes has not been done before on a mass-production scale. By combining Knoll's flat line finishing capabilities in its Toronto manufacturing facility with its traditional approach to craftsmanship in assembling casegoods, the Graham Collection incorporates some pretty distinct features, including its signature cantilevered open shelves and vertical setbacks on horizontal shelves that maintain a maximum level of finish quality.

"It was a leap to take a systems furniture approach to solidly crafted casegoods," says Graham, who is no stranger to this product genre, having previously designed wood casegoods lines for Halcon and Decca. "Knoll had to work out every possible detail, which took it to another level of excellence. They went through a process of testing myriad configurations." While casegoods are most typically glued and doweled, then finished after assembly, the products in the Graham Collection are finished first as flat panels (the same way systems furniture is manufactured), then assembled as traditional casegoods. As a result, all sides and edges of each panel are crisply finished, which allows for the exposed edges that give this substantial, architectural line a lighter, more open feel. "That was the key factor that influenced the design of the collection," says Graham.

Benjamin Pardo, Knoll's director of design, got Graham to think about his debut collection for Knoll in a different way right from the beginning of the design process. "Benjamin really thinks about casegoods as three horizontal zones," explains Graham. Pardo likens the overhead to the head of a person—an active zone for storage and display that is the first thing to visually engage a visitor. The middle zone, or work zone, is the interactive zone at the heart of the product. The lower zone is the storage base that weights or grounds the entire assembly. "His comments challenged my assumptions," admits Graham. "We both agreed that the top zone has been overlooked in casegoods design. The use of vertical space makes sense for a lot of people. It becomes a secondary level of architecture." In Graham's view, casegoods are both about being architecture, and being respectful of it.

Following Pardo's approach, The Graham Collection balances a variety of comprehensive work-wall storage configurations with low and full-height horizontal overheads, credenzas, peninsula desks, and freestanding desks. Three edge profiles, four leg options, and five pull options are available, including Graham's favorite, leather drawer pulls. There is also an extensive finish palette, including 18 wood veneers that celebrate the beauty of natural wood, 16 Spinneybeck leathers for pulls and wrapped worksurfaces, four plated finishes, seven glass and three marble worksurface tops, and six paint options—all of which combine to make a range of architectural statements, from quiet to bold. Given the reality of other classic and iconic Knoll pieces that might complement this collection, Graham notes, "At times the casegoods will need to stand on their own and at times they will need to recede."

Such humility is necessary for any designer attempting to live up to the Florence Knoll name but not off of it, says Graham. So anyone who knows him and his legendary sense of humor will chuckle when he jokingly invokes Howard Roarke, Mike Brady, and Mies van der Rohe as three major architectural influences in his life. But the fact of the matter is, on Knoll's very impressive list of design partners Graham now sits between Alexander Girard and Charles Gwathmey—by his assessment, a pretty respectable place in history. Circle No. 200

karma chameleon

Patty Madden's revolutionary Flip collection changes colors in a flash, promising positive results for manufacturer Luxe Surfaces

By Danine Alati

Spoon Damask

Things aren't always what they seem. And such is the case with Flip, Patty Madden's latest wallcovering collection for Luxe Surfaces, the company created three years ago along with Gary Miller and Mike Leon to market the Patty Madden brand of wallcoverings. Swimming pool blue one minute, vivid violet the next, many of the patterns in this new line appear as one color, and then transition—or "flip"—to another, with the introduction of light.

"I've been doing more transitional products. I wanted to do something contemporary here—but not cartoonish. The key is to figure out how to do a product that's both contemporary and sophisticated, which isn't always easy," Madden says. "Wallcoverings serve as a backdrop, and you usually don't want anything too strong that would dominate a space. But I wanted to do something that would come alive."

While there are a lot of neutrals in the seven-pattern collection that was introduced at HD Expo in May, Madden goes out on a limb with some risky, vibrant hues, as well. And not all colors "flip," using unique dichroic inks that allow for this transition. A dichroic material causes light to be split up into distinct beams of different wavelengths (or colors) so that changing the light source and/or point of perception, seem to shift the colors. "I wanted to really step over color lines. I tried to cover some more conservative colorations, but also added in some wild ones, too," she notes. "Patterns are dramatic and coordinate with other textures."

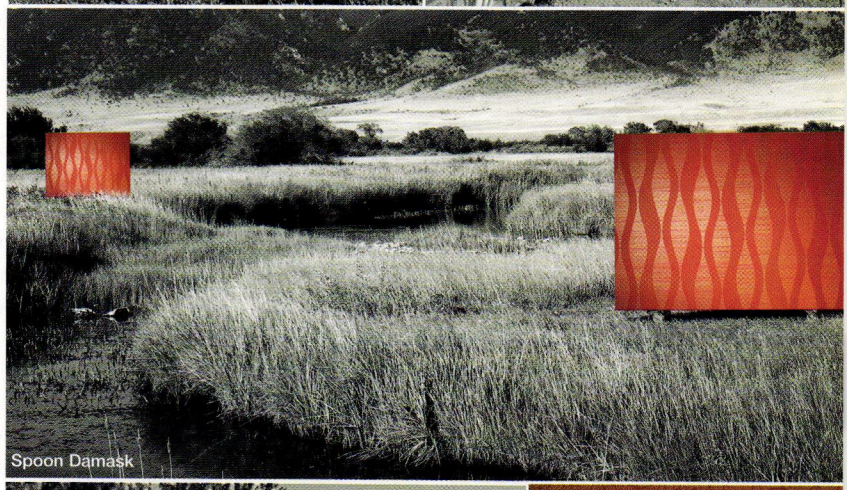
"The designs themselves are a mix between contemporary and transitional. They have a sensual organic feel and are very comforting and pleasing," says Leon, president and CEO of Luxe Surfaces, adding, "Spoon Damask's undulating curves are just delicious." Complementing the large-scale sinuous form of Spoon Damask, the long, fluid, rib stripe of Koda offers an organic feel that just keeps on going, with no repeat for 52 in. The deco print Natalia coordinates well with the little pin-dot pattern Dotzilla. Both smaller-scale patterns are created with a kiss print technology, which is achieved with an embossing machine that just touches the paper surface so that the print pops off the face, Madden explains. Argus Vine harkens back to traditional Patty Madden prints with a contemporary twist and, along with Hour Glass, coordinates with Zircon, an extremely successful Luxe pattern resurrected from the Spline collection and reintroduced in the Flip line.

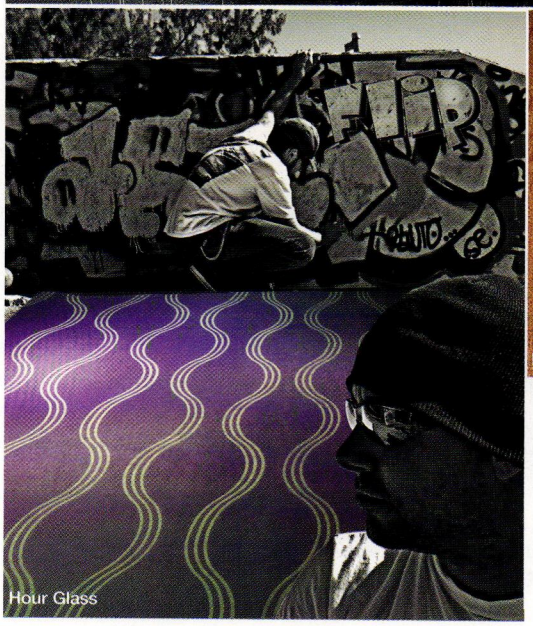
Even though some of these Type II vinyl wallcoverings feature large-scale patterns, Madden is pleased to see that they all work well in small spaces. The concept behind the line is that the product range can be used throughout a commercial space or in a hotel from guestrooms to public spaces. "Right now the hospitality segment seems to be driving the market," Leon notes. "And, while large-scale designs are more limited in use, the healthcare and retail segments have found these products a welcome alternative to the old standards."

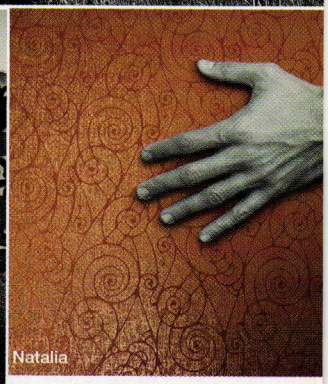
Obviously named Flip for the product's ability to shift instantly from what it is to something else entirely, the collection also made people "flip out" when they first saw samples, according to Madden—a positive reaction that should mean good things for Luxe Surfaces all around. Circle No. 201

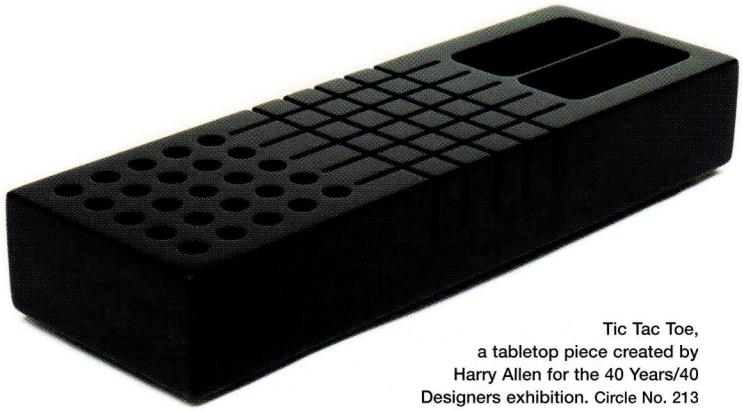
Koda

Argus Vine


Spoon Damask


Hour Glass


Natalia



Tic Tac Toe, a tabletop piece created by Harry Allen for the 40 Years/40 Designers exhibition. Circle No. 213

older is better

At 40 years old, Corian® is far from over the hill

By Sofia Galadza

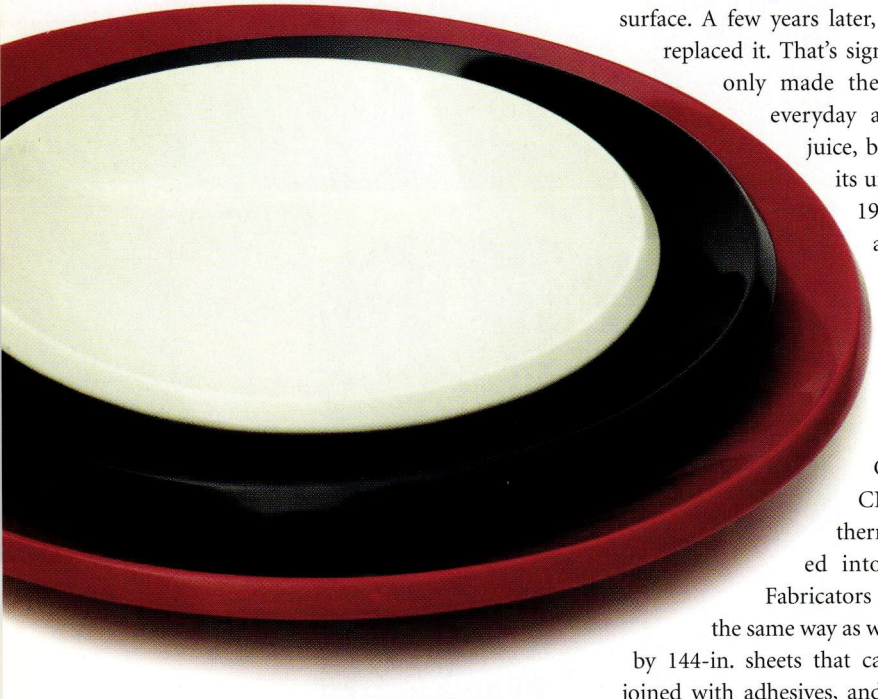
Materials don't really get makeovers. It's more a case of them evolving and becoming more useful and better looking. A prime example: the 40-year evolution of Corian® from a countertop material to one utilized in myriad ways by today's design community. "Designers and architects are driving this movement and bringing this material to the forefront of design," says Claudio Greco, DuPont Surfaces marketing communications manager (Europe, Middle East, and Africa).

DuPont™ introduced Corian—a blend of natural materials and pure acrylic polymer—in the form of vanity tops. Early on, it was on the road to improvement. At first, Corian contained calcium carbonate in a special blend that formed the solid surface. A few years later, aluminum trihydride replaced it. That's significant because it not only made the surface resistant to everyday acids, such as lemon juice, but it also gave Corian its unique translucency. By 1972, the material was available in sheet form, allowing it to be fabricated according to the designer's whims.

Now available in more than 140 colors, Corian can be carved, CNC routed, backlit, thermoformed, and molded into almost any design. Fabricators work with Corian in the same way as wood. It comes in 30-in. by 144-in. sheets that can be cut with a saw, joined with adhesives, and sanded to a smooth, seamless finish. More sophisticated designs may involve thermoforming. When heated to 350 degrees, Corian becomes pliable, and it keeps its new shape once cooled.

Designers from around the world began experimenting with the material in the mid-1990s, using Corian to create furniture and lighting. For example, Matthew Hoey designed the "Lounge Chair," which used thermoformed Corian to perfectly match the contours of the human body. Marc Newson designed lamps highlighting the formability and the translucency of Corian. Ron Arad combined Corian with fiber optics and electronics. And this past Spring, to celebrate its anniversary, Corian launched a traveling exhibition at its Milan store called 40 Years/40 Designers. The show included pieces by Jeffrey Bernett, Harry Allen, and David Rockwell, among others. Rockwell, who designed a serving platter, describes the concept for his project: "We played with the notion of surface and the dichotomy between the real and the man-made in developing a serving platter and a salad server made of white Corian—which is of course a completely man-made material—but embedding the surface with a Corian Gold-Grain pattern so that it feels real and natural."

Corian may be seen in a range of sleek products and projects, but there are features that make it an ideal material for more prosaic needs. Thanks to its non-porous, seamless composition, it is ideal for healthcare settings. Corian and its sealants and adhesives are GREENGUARD Indoor Air Quality Certified®. It also makes the grade for another standard: GREENGUARD for Children & Schools Certification. And when kids scratch the stain-resistant surface, all it takes is a few rubs of fine sandpaper to make the material look new again—a feature they'll appreciate years from now. C



The red, black and white plates: Om, a tabletop piece created by Jeffrey Bernett for the 40 Years/40 Designers exhibition. Circle No. 214

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re-materializing

Like shopping at a used clothing store, reusing materials requires an open mind and desire to work off of what you find

By Dan Rappel

Designers have innumerable sources of inspiration, one of which is a material. The design forms around the qualities of the materials—their texture, color, finish. In the case of reusing materials, this impetus for design becomes nearly requisite.

For example, take Valerio Dewalt Train's Kresge Foundation Headquarters, located on a historic farmstead in Troy, Mich. The building design consists of a sleek, two-story office building "buried" in a landscape of historic and quasi-historic farm structures. While we made a conscious effort to use repurposed materials where possible, our emphasis was on using recycled content and rapidly renewable resources. When a possible substitution of reused materials presented itself, we took it, specifically in two places: the gabion retaining walls and the heavy timber framing in the lunchroom.

Because the foundation is buried one story deep, we made extensive use of retaining walls to provide light-giving courtyards to the lower floor office areas. Originally these walls were cast-in-place concrete. Substituting gabions gave us a more attractive finish and the ability to reuse crushed concrete from the demolition of the existing building. The lunchroom is housed in a barn structure that was brought to the site in the 1980s and has been used since that time as a caretaker's apartment. Air distribution in the lunch room/barn is provided by an underfloor air system. This means that interior columns in the old barn became too short and needed to be spliced or replaced. We chose to replace the columns entirely with salvaged heavy timber columns, which helped us better match the language of the existing barn. In this substitution paradigm, the reuse of materials has becomes opaque to the visitor. This is also the case with the gabion walls and barn framing. Because the gabion walls are faced with crushed granite, the reuse of materials in the gabions is literally opaque.

By contrast, when reused materials are the source of inspiration or integral with design ideas, there is more transparency to their use. As an example, my wife and I are building our own home on a forgotten piece of land in the North Center neighborhood of Chicago. While the house has a distinctly modern aesthetic, we plan to use salvaged materials extensively—particularly as fixtures and hardware. These materials will be celebrated as a contrast to the minimal design of the massing and detailing seen elsewhere in the house. Salvaged materials include bathroom millwork and antique credenzas that will be refinished white, with a sink inserted in the top surface. In this way, the stark minimalism of the house will be interrupted with a sensual object. Accent lighting throughout will use salvaged fixtures, upgraded to utilize LED technology and refinished in white. Groupings of reclaimed chandeliers will be used in both the double-height dining and living spaces.

Designing with reused materials is analogous to shopping at a used clothing store. While it is possible to enter a resale shop with a specific product in mind, this is not usually a fruitful process. Resale shops are better utilized when you enter with an open mind and work off the charm and personality of the used merchandise. Similarly, used building content often has its own personality and baggage, which can preclude these materials from simply being substituted for a new product.

A good place to seek out worthwhile reusable materials is on the Internet. The Building Materials Reuse Association's Web site, www.ubma.org, has a searchable directory of companies that specialize in material reuse. In addition, there's an e-newsletter and an archive of the articles they publish. The members-only website, www.build.recycle.net, is a vehicle for trading and selling salvaged materials. You'll also find links to building reuse associations and exchanges. C

Used building content often has its own personality and baggage, which can preclude these materials from simply being substituted for a new product.

Dan Rappel, AIA, LEED AP, is an associate at Valerio Dewalt Train Associates in Chicago, where he works with the firm's institutional and educational clients.

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Tian Zi Fang (above). Offered by Wu Melsen.

creative shanghai

Through targeted preservation and redevelopment efforts, architecture, history, and art combine to support the local economy in China's most creative city

By Angela Tang

In recent years, a wave of creativity has swept through China, with Shanghai emerging as the leading city in the Chinese creative industry. At the center of Shanghai's creative development are 75 "creative industry clusters" that have been officially recognized by the city's municipal government as districts ripe for cultural preservation and economic growth. As a result, the many traditional workshops, warehouses, factories and other buildings located in these clusters are being exploited and rehabilitated with the goal of supporting the development of China's creative industry while also protecting Shanghai's historic industrial architecture and encouraging cultural sightseeing. To date, more than 2,000 creative design enterprises, coming from more than 32 regions including Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Turkey, the United States, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, have entered the art parks, bringing together a large group of outstanding artists and designers from all over the world.

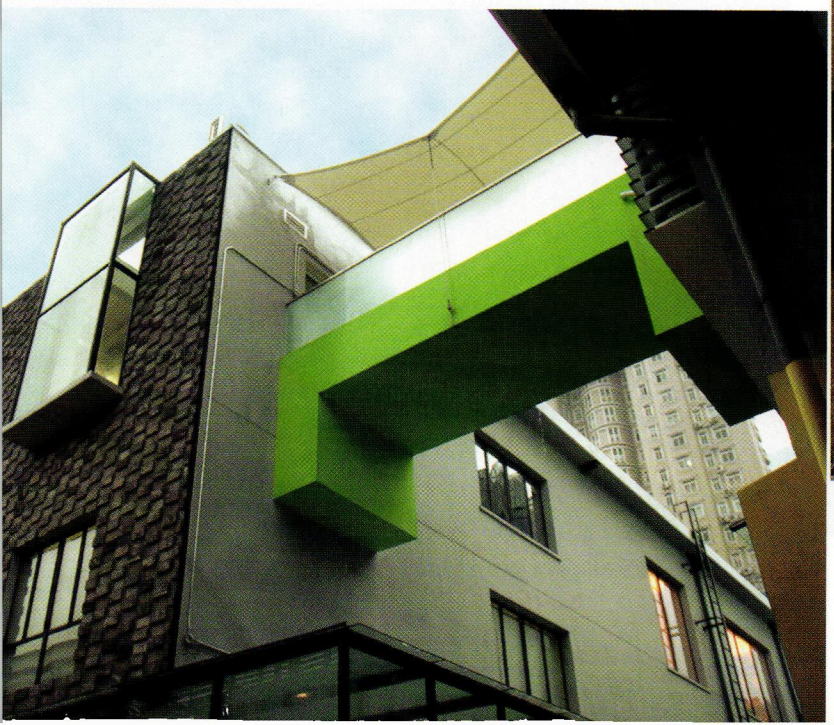
Among all of the creative industry clusters, Tian Zi Fang, the Bridge 8, Z58, M50, and Creative Warehouse are most typical. The most successful cluster, Tian Zi Fang, has already emerged as the model of Shanghai's developing intellectual industry, and uniquely demonstrates the value of protecting the City's local culture and style. The Bridge 8 offers an example of converting the traditional manufacturing industry to the modern service industry in the downtown area. Z58 is the center of art, culture, and design—the creativity laboratory and the workshop for communication where infinite possibilities are vividly reflected. The artists and the institutes of creative design in M50 create the cultural ambience along the Su Zhou He River. The designer and modifier of Creative Warehouse utilized the "see and be seen" philosophy to pervade the old warehouse.

Tian Zi Fang

Tian Zi Fang was once a small, shabby, and disorderly factory. In 1998, the government of the Luwan district modified the old factory, which covered 15,000 sq. m., and began to attract foreign investment. To date, 137 independently managed art and design enterprises, comprising 87 foreigners from 21 countries, have set up shop in Tian Zi Fang, which is widely accepted as the "Silicon Valley" of Shanghai's visual industry. Here, the preservation of the small factory located in a shallow lane has organically combined with the typical architecture of Shi Ku Men (typical row house architecture) to bring together old and new; history is perfectly united with reality to stimulate the senses. Some 78 Shi Ku Men residences around Tian Zi Fang also have been independently modified by local residents, and attract a large number of tourists with their unique architectural style. The cluster of Tian Zi Fang was top on the list of "The Best Creative Industry Parks in China" in 2006, and its planner, Wu Meisen, is regarded as one of the leaders of China's creative industry.

The Bridge 8

The Bridge 8 is the former Shanghai Motor Break Factory, and also covers 15,000 sq. m. A recent renovation by the Japanese designers Hirokawa and Kenji completely preserved the Bridge 8's massive brick walls, its intricate pipelines, and the mottled floor. An office building linking the former workshops is full of traditional charm, while the modern interiors express contemporary culture. The design of time and space is pioneering yet simple, introverted yet unique. Hirokawa and Kenji rebuilt the factory by introducing modern elements into its historic fabric, thus preserving its heritage while creating a modern new face that thrusts the chain of creative tenants onto a fashionable new stage.



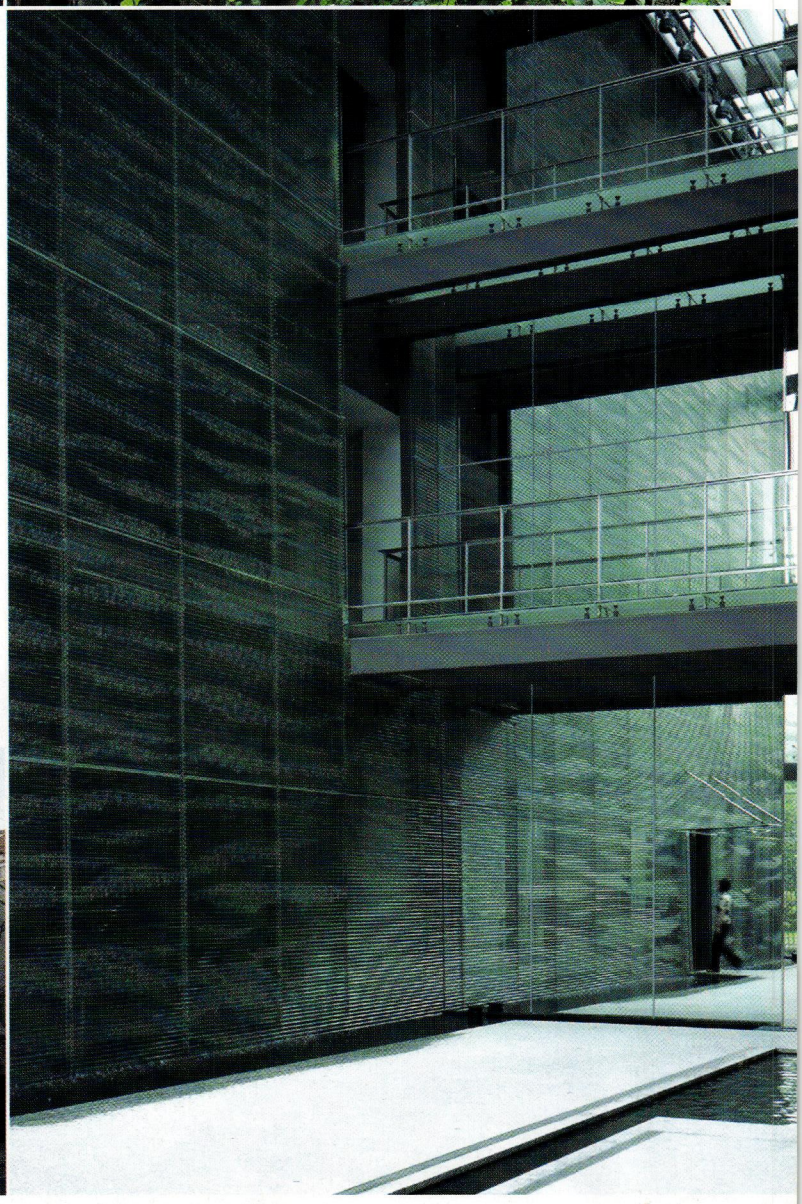
The Bridge 8 before renovation (above) and after (left and top). Photos by Hu Wenjie, offered by HMA Architects & Designers.

Z58

The Japanese designer Kengo Kuma rebuilt a former Shanghai Watch Factory into Z58, an ecological space where greenness, water, and light, converse, according to the theme of "Dialogue." Kuma's holistic focus on details and proportion resulted in a 4,000-sq.-m. space that embodies the power of modern architecture. The serene, modest, and beautiful Z58 is both a laboratory to discover the interplay between architecture and light, and a grand church in which to display the phenomenon of light. The interior feels like an intricate box endowing energy to the whole living, breathing building, which exists harmoniously with its surroundings to make an attractive and fashionable addition to the architectural content of Shanghai.

M50

M50, located along the south bank of Su Zhou He River, covers 23,397 sq. m. and preserves more than 50 buildings in varied styles that were used for the national weaving industry from the 1930s to the 1990s. The typical industrial architecture of the traditional brick/wood, brick/concrete, and steel/concrete structures, together with the grand, bright workshop, strongly connect the entire cluster to Shanghai's cultural past. At present, it is one of the most completely preserved examples of China's weaving industry architecture.



Z58. Photos by Fujitsuka Mitsumasa.

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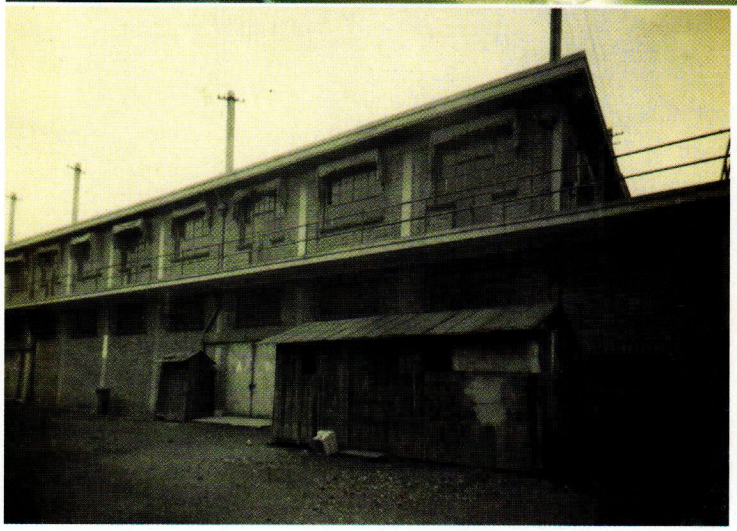
M50 has attracted more than 130 artists from 10 Chinese mainland provinces and 16 foreign regions, including Britain, France, Italy, Switzerland, Israel, Norway, and Hong Kong, as well as art galleries, aviation designers, architecture firms, movie and television production studios, environmental design firms, jewelry designers, and so on. Among them, ShanghArt Gallery, established by a Swiss named Lorenz Helbling, and BizArt Center, established by an Italian named Davide Quadrio, are on the list of the best galleries in China and enjoy a high reputation in their field.



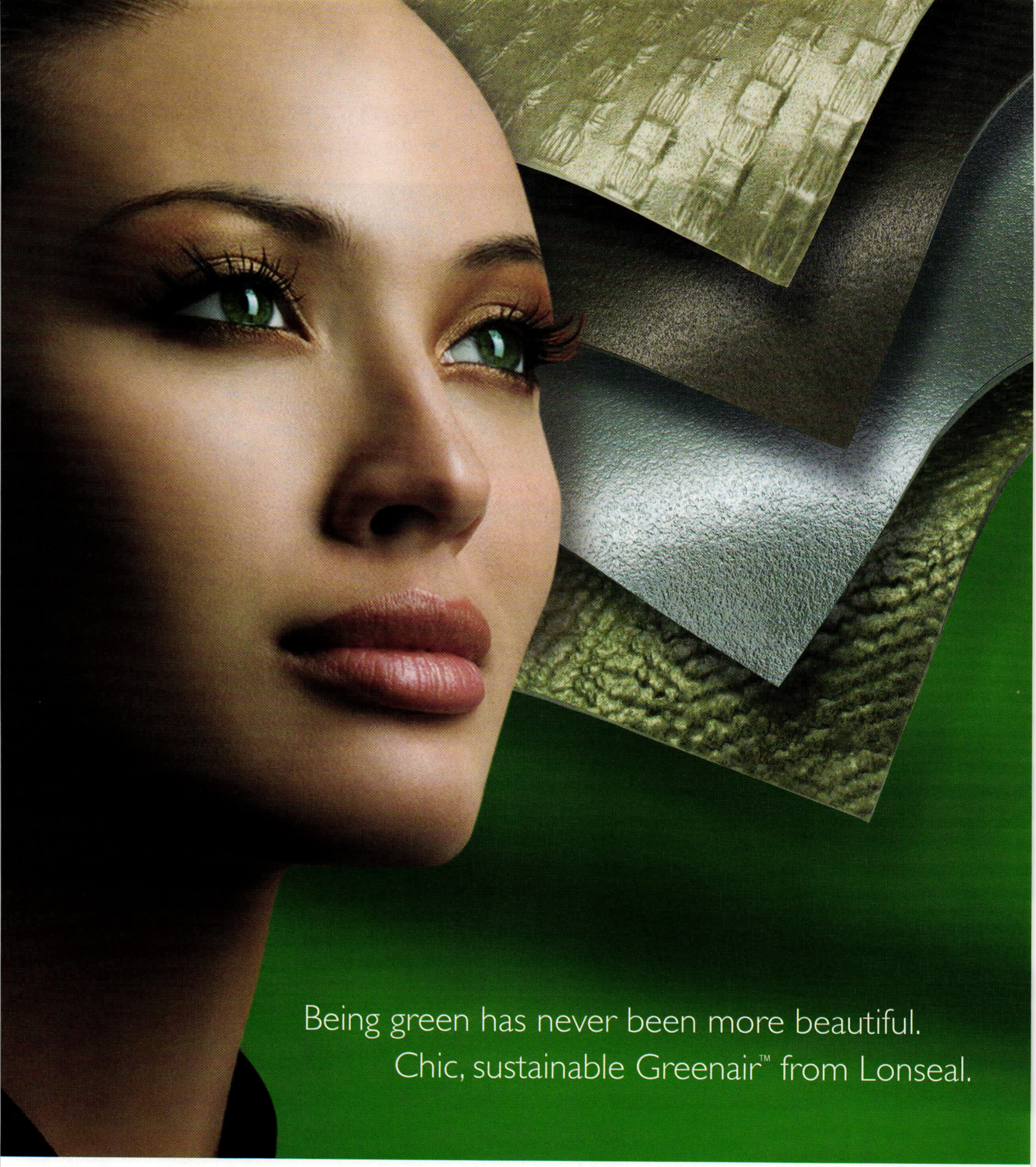
M50 (above). Photos offered by Jin Weidong.

Creative Warehouse

Creative Warehouse, situated along the north bank of Su Zhou He River, was the former warehouse for four banks. The six-story, steel/concrete structure building was built in 1913. In 1999, the architect Liu Jidong, returning from United States, established his own architecture practice in the building, and the warehouse finally evolved into the present Creative Warehouse. Today the building preserves its typical historic façade, but reveals a distinct modern space behind its big, dark gates.

The planning of Creative Warehouse combined the revitalization of the old warehouse with the creation of its new life. The designer applied a post-Modernist solution to the entire, 12,000-sq.-m. interior, discovering its originality, and making the architecture with more than 100 years history the dreamland of creatives.

Creative warehouse (below left and right). Photos offered by Creative Warehouse.



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something old, something new

Adaptive reuse is the way to go

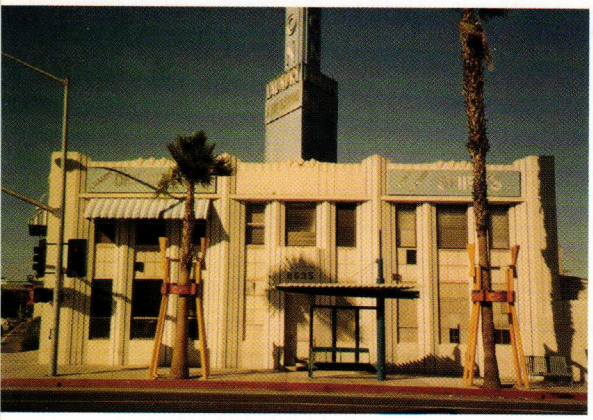
By Linda Burnett

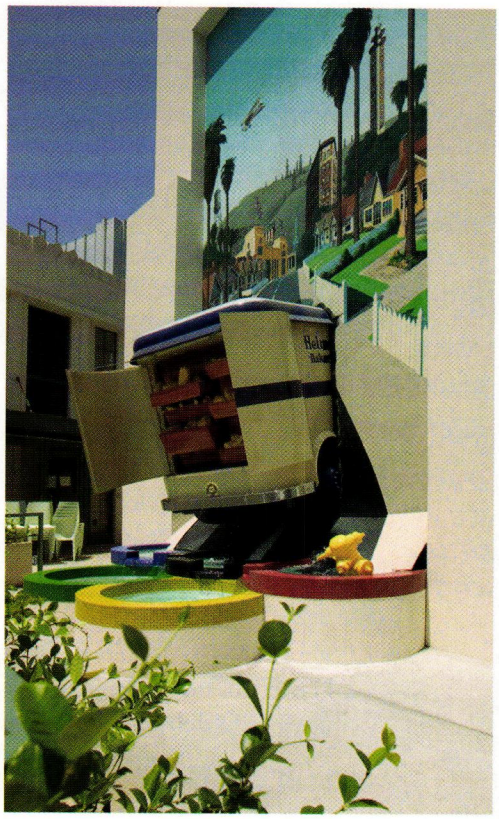
You'd have to be living under a rock not to realize that hugging everything that is environmentally friendly (and not just trees) has become the choice of the fashion-conscious, the celebrated, and the politically inclined: The English designer Anya Hindmarch's ecologically minded bags that announce "I'm not a plastic bag" have consumers standing in line for hours to purchase $15 totes that command $200 on eBay. Leonardo DiCaprio drives his democratically priced Prius around hipster Los Angeles 'hoods. And there's Al Gore with his reality-check documentary. Everyone is trying to shake a past of apathy and be proactive about their part in saving the world.

Luckily, with the increasingly popular building strategy of adaptive reuse, architects and designers are leading the pack toward a more sustainable planet. What makes adaptive reuse so appealing is that it allows us to turn something old into something new while retaining a piece of local history and color. The Tate Modern in London is one of the most high-profile, successful adaptive reuse projects. Originally a power plant, architects Herzog and de Meuron converted it into a museum, taking advantage of the preexisting high ceilings and solid structure.

Adaptive reuse is happening in both big and small ways, from the historically significant 1929 Art Deco Palmolive office building in Chicago, designed by Holabird & Root, that was turned into a hotel, to a 1937 Los Angeles theater that Austin, Texas-based Rogers and Perry Architects transformed into a bookstore in the early '90—with the marquee intact. It's primarily up to the developer to turn to adaptive reuse and not the tenant, says Sally Wilson, director of advisory services for CB Richard Ellis Brokerage in Washington, D.C. But adaptive reuse can be used to attract the tenant. "The developer is always looking to create a differential in the product," says Wilson. "Since adaptive reuse is inherently more green it can mean a LEED rating or certification."

Einhorn Yaffee Prescott, in conjunction with OPN Architects, conducted a two-phase renovation/restoration of the 22,442-sq-.ft Old Capitol Museum at the University of Iowa (left and above). The first repaired the damage from a 2001 fire and restored the cupola, exterior dome, and west portico. The second phase addressed exterior masonry, windows, existing trim, and interior spaces including lighting and the introduction of a Greek Revival color scheme. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 and earned a 2007 SCUP/AIA Honor Award for Excellence in Architecture or Preservation.





In giving a second life to the Beacon Laundry building in Culver City, Calif., WWCOT sought to preserve the original façade (above bottom left) as it was considered an integral part of the local architectural landscape. The interiors (above top left and above right), however, received a complete overhaul to transform the space into an office complex. (Original exterior photo courtesy of WWCOT, interior and redesigned exterior photo by Wayne Thom.)

Some of the markets that are at their hottest for adaptive reuse include residential, educational, and boutique hotels, which can benefit from an urban locale. "Often buildings are no longer viable as office space, but because of the location or quality of the architecture, they can command rates," says David Fixler, principal at Boston-based Einhorn Yaffee Prescott. There may be different reasons why one would decide on adaptive reuse. The brother to historical preservation, adaptive reuse is more about practical choices than it is about maintaining a landmark, but the two are not mutually exclusive. "Even if the building isn't a landmark, it might have charm, or the costs to tear it down are too much," says Fixler, who often works on projects in the education sector. "In the case of colleges and universities, there's a premium placed on tradition on campuses and a strong impetus to use old buildings."

Although a project can often be completed faster when the shell is preserved, it won't always be the most economical option. "There's the can-of-worms factor," says Andrea Cohen Gehring, partner and design director at Los Angeles-based architectural firm WWCOT. "You might open the wall and find out you're working with a completely different issue than you originally thought." And there's seismic retrofitting and upgrading to consider. But for many architects, designers, and developers, the benefits of adaptive reuse are tremendous when considering the context of the building. For the revitalization of Los Angeles's downtown, reusing old office and industrial buildings for residential units is what's bringing in a wave of tenants. "Adaptive reuse helps solve urban blight," says Cohen Gehring, who converted the 1931 Beacon Laundry building into an office complex in Culver City, Calif., a neighborhood that is going through a rebirth. She kept the striking exterior that was integral to the local architectural landscape, thereby preserving the original charm while adding a new and necessary function that would bring new business to the neighborhood.

Cities, where many buildings have landmark status already, are prime for adaptive reuse. "In older, industrial cities, such as Detroit, Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore, there are great old buildings that create anchors," says Mike O'Neill, CEO of Philadelphia-based developer Preferred Real Estate, whose adaptive reuse work spans from Florida to New England and west to Ohio. But even when the building isn't particularly important, "there's now a tendency to be receptive to reworking the old rather than ripping up the corn fields," adds O'Neill.

In Washington, D.C., it's often a non-issue whether a building should undergo adaptive reuse. Since many are historic government buildings, it's often considered an "outcropping of the preservation movement," says Kim Heartwell, vice president and co-director of the interiors studio at RTKL in Washington, D.C. The fact that a developer can get tax credits for it helps move the case along and continues its popularity. But reworking what's already there doesn't come without its many challenges. Since the point is to keep the facade and basic structure intact, which often means retaining columns and beams, it can be complicated to replace the infrastructure, perhaps the biggest challenge. Next in line is an environmental impact study, by which hazardous materials such as asbestos can be measured, especially with industrial buildings. ADA-compliance is an additional consideration. "If you're retaining stairs, floor-to-floor height, or the original entrance you also need handicap accessibility," says Heartwell. "The challenge is to include elements like discrete ramps while being respectful to the original design intention."

There are many faces to adaptive reuse. One of the best is that by retaining as much of a building as possible, especially its history, it sends a message that what we put on this earth has the potential to be here long after we're gone. We might as well work with what we've got. In this way, sustainable building practices like adaptive reuse have gone beyond being a trend to become a matter of good business.

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live and learn

Bosch & Fjord's redesign of the Ordrup School in Gentofte, Denmark, serves as a learning tool for all involved

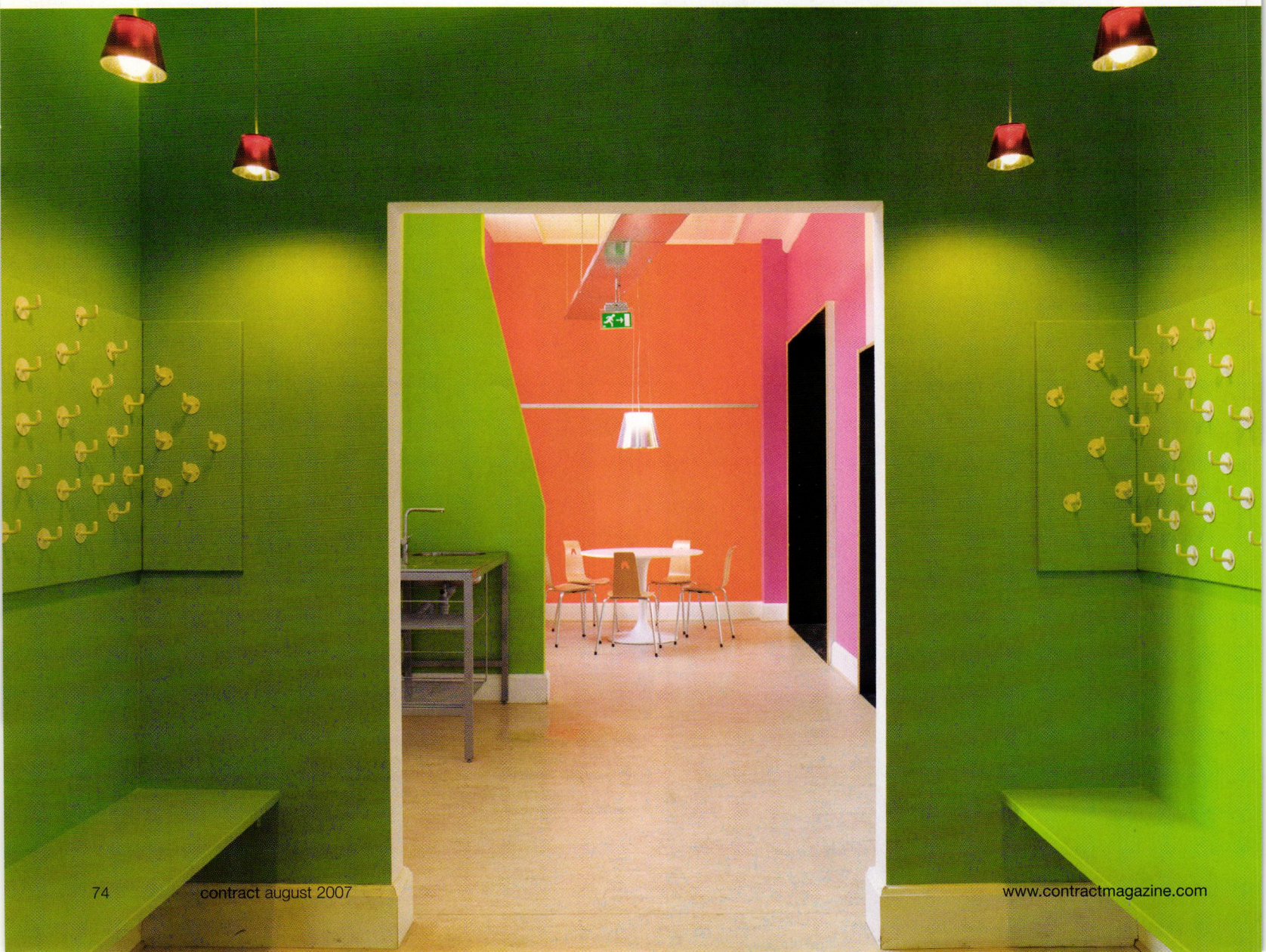
By Katie Weeks
Photography by Anders Sune Berg

Bright colors and a purposeful lack of overhead fluorescent lights are two design tactics employed by Bosch & Fjord to liven up the Ordrup school's interiors. Instead of the harsh lighting usually found in schools, the designers installed hanging lamps (left). Color palettes like a rich red and eye-popping green (above) were chosen in conjunction with the school's students and staff.

With its bright green walls and tabletops, cozy individual reading tubes, and carpeted walls, Ordrup School in Gentofte, Denmark, rebels against the impersonal, institutional feel often associated with schools. And its students and faculty couldn't be happier.

In its prior life, Ordrup was a more traditional learning environment. "All over the world, we have ordinary schools with ordinary classrooms," says Ordrup's former headmaster John-Erik Bang. And Ordrup was no exception. This antiquated model, however, was detrimental to both staff and the school's 600 students who range in age from six to 15 years old. Not all students learn in the same manner, and the new and varied classrooms now being integrated into teaching practices require fresh thinking about school design. "The physical frame of the school wasn't enabling the teachers to teach in different ways," notes Rosan Bosch, partner at Bosch & Fjord, the Copenhagen-based design firm hired to redesign the outdated structure. So, Bang says, "While we could have built a new school like the old model, with new colors, walls, and blackboards, we decided that since we now know a lot about learning that wasn't known years ago, we should use it."

To best address the myriad learning methods now available, the designers literally went back to school, moving themselves into Ordrup. "In this kind of big building project, it's often the architects who solve the problems while the people become more passive in the process," says Bosch. By integrating itself within the school and constantly



engaging the teachers and students in the design process, the firm sought to reinstate a sense of ownership so the building morphed beyond a physical space. "We focus on the design, but the most important thing is not the way it looks. It's what the design does," says Bosch. "And the most important thing about our process was that it gave back the initiative to the teachers and pupils to use the space as an active tool in their everyday lives."

Throughout the design phase, Bosch & Fjord assigned the students and teachers various exercises. In one, each class received disposable cameras with the task of photographing its favorite and least favorite things in the building. In another, students and teachers were given colored Post-It notes and asked to label spots in the building, explaining what they liked and disliked. The resulting sea of yellow and pink notes (one color for teachers, the other for students) was more than just visual entertainment: "The adults could then see the way the children experience the space and vice versa," says Bosch.

From this interaction, the designers developed three concepts: "peace and absorption," "discussion and cooperation," and "security and presence." Spaces designed for peace and absorption focus on individual learning, where the round reading tubes allow younger students to curl up with a book. Meanwhile, team spaces like the sculptural "hot pots"—green platforms with round red cut-outs that are big enough to hold a small group—and moveable red sofas on bright yellow floors are louder in color to encourage collaboration. To make students feel secure, the

In the hallways (above and right), small teaming areas break up the corridor and, according to former Ordrup headmaster John-Erik Bang, have helped reduce students running. Rethinking school design to include quirky accents like carpet on the walls alongside large-scale graphics or a rearranged coatroom (opposite) provide a dash of fun.

Mobility is key, whether it's equipping tables with castors (above left) for easy movement or giving students individual carpet pads that can be plopped down anywhere in the school to create an immediate work area (above right).

designers focused on creating a comfortable, homey environment and included living room-like spaces with sofas and tables. In addition, each teaching team in the school (consisting of four to five teachers and three to four classes of students) were encouraged to personalize their individual areas. "It means the school is not one big white, green, or grey institution, but a big building with nine different identities," says Bang.

Of course, overhauling the entire building also required renovating a few attitudes along the way. "Whenever you have a large group, there are always people who are very conservative and against change," Bosch says. The key, she notes, is finding a way to incorporate them in the process so they feel like part of the team. Working within the public school's budget was another challenge, as was completing construction without shutting down the school. The hard work, however, was worth it. Since opening in mid 2006, Ordrup has received rave reviews not only from its occupants, but also from educators around the globe. "It has set in motion a lot of ideas about developing school furniture that doesn't have to be standard thinking," Bosch says. "This is full of possibility." ◘

who

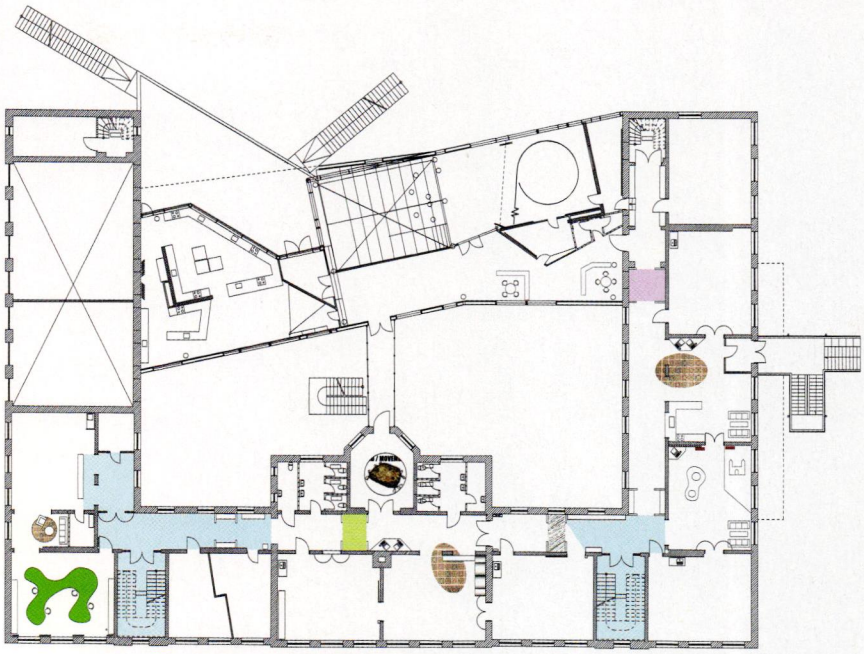
Project: Ordrup School. *Client:* SKUB, a school development and expansion project in Gentofte Municipality, and Ordrup School. *Designer:* Bosch & Fjord; Rosan Bosch, Rune Fjord Jensen, Helene Øllgaard, Bodil Bøjer, Malene Høegh Bendtsen, Astrid Mody, Jackie Bertelsen, Tilde Aagaard, Janne Raahauge, VTI Vistic v. Poul-Erik Christensen. *Photographer:* Anders Sune Berg.

what

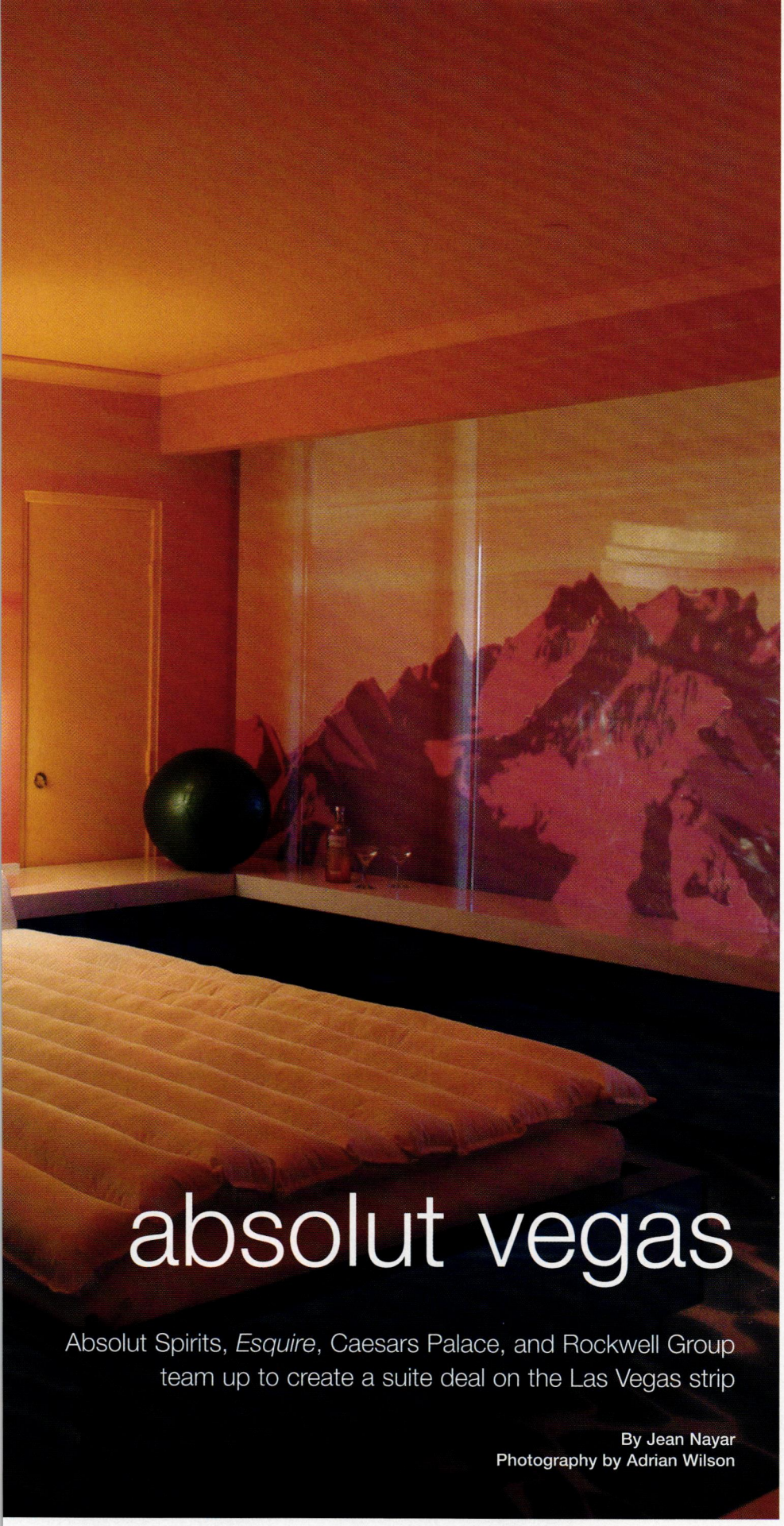
Carpentry: Hoffmann A/S. *Lighting:* Flos. *Upholstery:* LM Tapetsererne. *Wallcovering:* Custom.

where

Location: Charlottenlund, Denmark. *Total floor area:* 5,800 sq. m. (addition).



The design of each space is meant to assist students in their work. Individual reading tubes (right) are provided to younger students for individual work, while small "hot pots" (above) are designed for small groups.



absolut vegas

Absolut Spirits, *Esquire*, Caesars Palace, and Rockwell Group team up to create a suite deal on the Las Vegas strip

By Jean Nayar
Photography by Adrian Wilson

If two heads are better than one, then it stands to reason that a joint marketing effort should be more effective than a single-handed one. At least that's what the promotions gurus of *Esquire* magazine and the Absolut Spirits Company concluded when they teamed up last year on a strategy to reach their overlapping target markets in a whole new way. The crux of their concept was to sponsor a contest that would enable one lucky winner to enjoy a weekend in Las Vegas with a crowd of friends, courtesy of Absolut and *Esquire*. But in order to deliver the prize in a way that would be collectively beneficial, the creative teams knew they needed to produce a highly stylized environment that would immerse the winner and his or her cronies in a totally memorable branded experience.

Star hospitality designer David Rockwell was called in to create a series of party suites in a primo Vegas hotel that would sophisticatedly, if subliminally, reinforce key aspects of both brands. The first step was finding a location, and Rockwell—who is well-known for an array of hip, theme-inspired hotel, theater, and restaurant projects, including W Hotels, the Mohegan Sun casino in Connecticut, and stage sets for the Broadway musical *Hairspray* among many others—used his experience to zero in on the right spot in Caesars Palace at the heart of the Vegas strip.

When New York-based Rockwell Group approached Caesars Palace about the project, the luxury theme resort was gearing up for its 40th anniversary, and the timing was perfect. The idea, says Kenneth Langdon, director of public relations for Caesars Palace, was to "transform one of our existing suites into a one-of-a-kind luxury suite. Because of the quality of the *Esquire* and Absolut brands, we thought it was a good match." Caesars offered up a series of adjoining rooms that were slated for renovation to serve as the foundation for the promotional party pad.

Dramatic lighting, a step-down ledge, custom carpeting that resembles water, and a bed shaped as an air mattress make the Absolute Apeach room (left) look like an indoor/outdoor pool area. A mural on one side creates the feeling of a mountain range off in the distance, and the patterned reflections in the carpet look like distorted vodka bottles.

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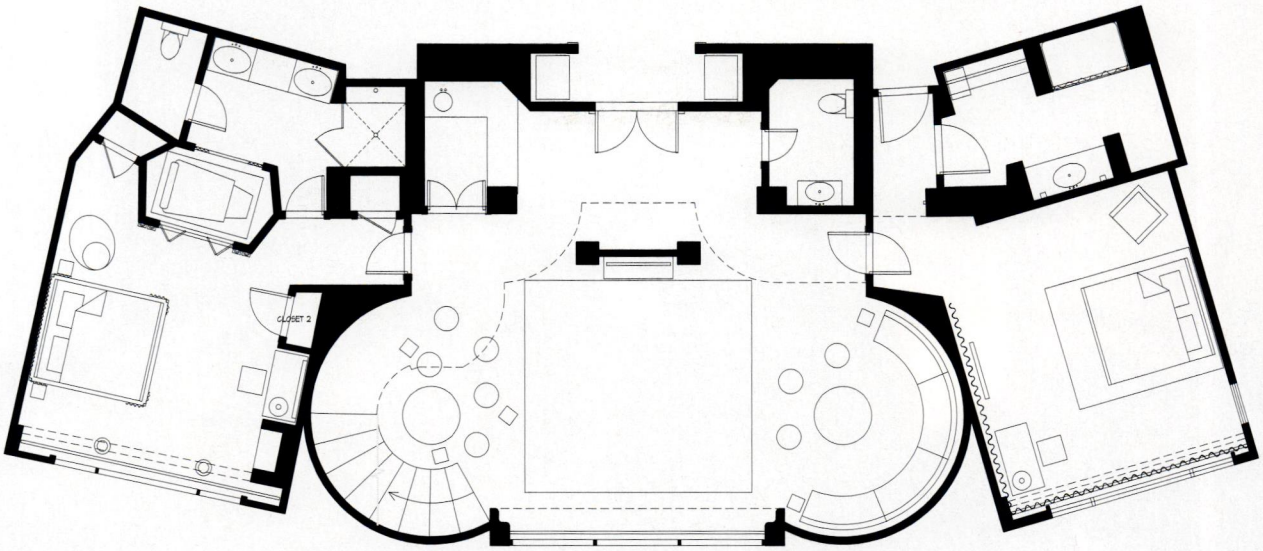
WAY
BROOKLYN BRIDGE



According to David Rockwell, "every job is about telling a story and emotionally connecting with people." In this case, the goal was to create what is called the "Find Your Flavor" suite, a series of separate rooms reflecting different flavors of Absolut's emerging collection of flavored vodkas. The specific suite's concept was to bring "six Absolut flavors to life in a manner evocative of their specific tastes and personalities," says Jeffrey Moran, senior director of brand and corporate communications for The Absolut Spirits Company.

With a tight budget and even tighter time frame (talks began last May and the project was completed in October), the designers relied on their bag of theatrical tricks to produce a series of vivid, inspired rooms that reflect Absolut's Mandarin, Raspberri, Vanilia, Ruby Red, Citron, and Apeach flavors. Occupying a 1,380-sq. ft., bi-level area, each room has its own identity and character, says Barry Richards, Rockwell Group's lead designer on the project. To reinforce the brand experience, the designers began by reinterpreting the aspects of Absolut's print ad campaign for each of the flavors. "We used graphics and palettes that matched Absolut's Pantone colors," Richards explains. But because the rooms would continue to function for the hotel after the joint promotion concluded, Caesars was keen on limiting any specific Absolut labeling on the actual furnishings or materials of the rooms. "We used shapes and colors to create a graphic impression of the Absolut brand without being literal in any way," says Richards. "Given the limited time frame and budget, we needed to treat the rooms less like a standard remodel and more like a theatrical staging project to fit the parameters of the clients."

Operating under this approach, the designers worked with a variety of manufacturers, including Wolf-Gordon, Milliken, Leucos, MechoShade, Northeast Fabric Innovations, and Design Setters, to produce custom wallcoverings, window treatments, flooring, lighting, and furnishings to distin-

The Absolut Raspberri room serves as the suite's primary party space (opposite). Reminiscent of a New York nightclub, the room includes a custom laser-cut light fixture, plush purple ottomans, curved banquette seating, and a baroque layering of patterns on the custom wallcovering (right).

The glacial ambience of the Absolut Vanilia room (above) stands as a cool counterpoint to the hot Las Vegas climate. A custom carpet that looks like an ice flow, an igloo-like custom bed, a slatted wall resembling a Swedish sauna, and sheer window treatments with images of vodka bottles and snowflakes combine to create a relaxed environment for chilling out. A surf-side feeling permeates the Absolut Citron room (opposite top), which includes a bed covered with a yellow-and-white canopy, reminiscent of a cabana, complete with pockets containing flip-flops. In the Absolut Ruby Red room (opposite bottom), a Mediterranean Riviera ambience prevails.

guish each room. The primary party room, for example, which reflects the raspberry-flavored vodka and occupies the suite's two-level area, looks like a plush New York nightclub with purple ottomans, curved banquette seating, and wallcoverings printed with layers of overscale patterns, some vaguely reminiscent of the shapes of wild raspberries. On the other hand, in one of the bedroom spaces—which expresses the citron flavor and occupies an enclosed area on the second floor—beachy touches, including a yellow-and-white cabana-like bed canopy, a surf-side lounge chair, and custom, lemon drop-shaped lamps, evoke a hang-loose attitude for after-party relaxation. Caesars' in-house construction crew handled all of the demolition, built-ins and painting for the project, and the designers drew upon their theater experience to round out the flavor of each room with creative, cost-efficient props.

Although the contest promotion ended last fall, the rooms continue to be rented by private individuals, public companies, and celebrities for parties and public appearances. "We were extremely pleased with how the Find Your Flavor Suite turned out," says Langdon. "The rooms are not like anything else found within Caesars Palace, and demand for them has been better than expected." According to Moran, Absolut was equally satisfied with the joint promotional effort. "Absolut has always been a trailblazer in the spirits industry, and this is just another example of how we bring our brand to life in an interesting and relevant manner," he says. "People go to Las Vegas to enjoy themselves, relax, and take in the sights of the city. What better way to live the Vegas lifestyle than in a suite that reflects one of the most prolific spirits brands in the world?" Based on the attention the suite gained during the promotion, says Moran, the company is also looking at bringing the concept to other hotel properties/venues in the months and years to come.

who

Project: Absolut "Find Your Flavor" Suite. *Client*: Absolut Spirits Company, *Esquire* magazine. *Interior designer, lighting designer*: Rockwell Group; David Rockwell, principal and founder; Barry Richards, studio leader; Matthew Goodrich, Eri Nagasaka, Lucinda Wait, Chad Rush, Timo Kuhn, Alexis Logothetis, Lauren Adams, Christian Arkay-Lelievre, Monica Gutierrez. *General contractor*: Caesars Palace. *Construction manager:* Dale Wisniewski, Caesars Palace. *Photographer*: Adrian Wilson.

what

Wallcoverings: Wolf-Gordon. *Paint*: Benjamin Moore. Laminate: Formica. *Carpet/carpet tile:* Milliken & Company. *Lighting*: Leucos. *Drapery*: Fabric Innovations, MechoShade, BCM (ball chain curtain). *Custom-printed textiles*: NorthEast Textiles. *Laser-cut bar front/chandeliers, custom guestroom beds, custom lounge seating, architectural woodworking*: Design Setters. *Guestroom tables*: Crate and Barrel, Design Setters. *Guestroom lighting*: Leucos. *Guest room seating:* West Elm, Crate and Barrel. *Occasional furniture:* Crate and Barrel. *Cabinetmaking*: Caesars Palace.

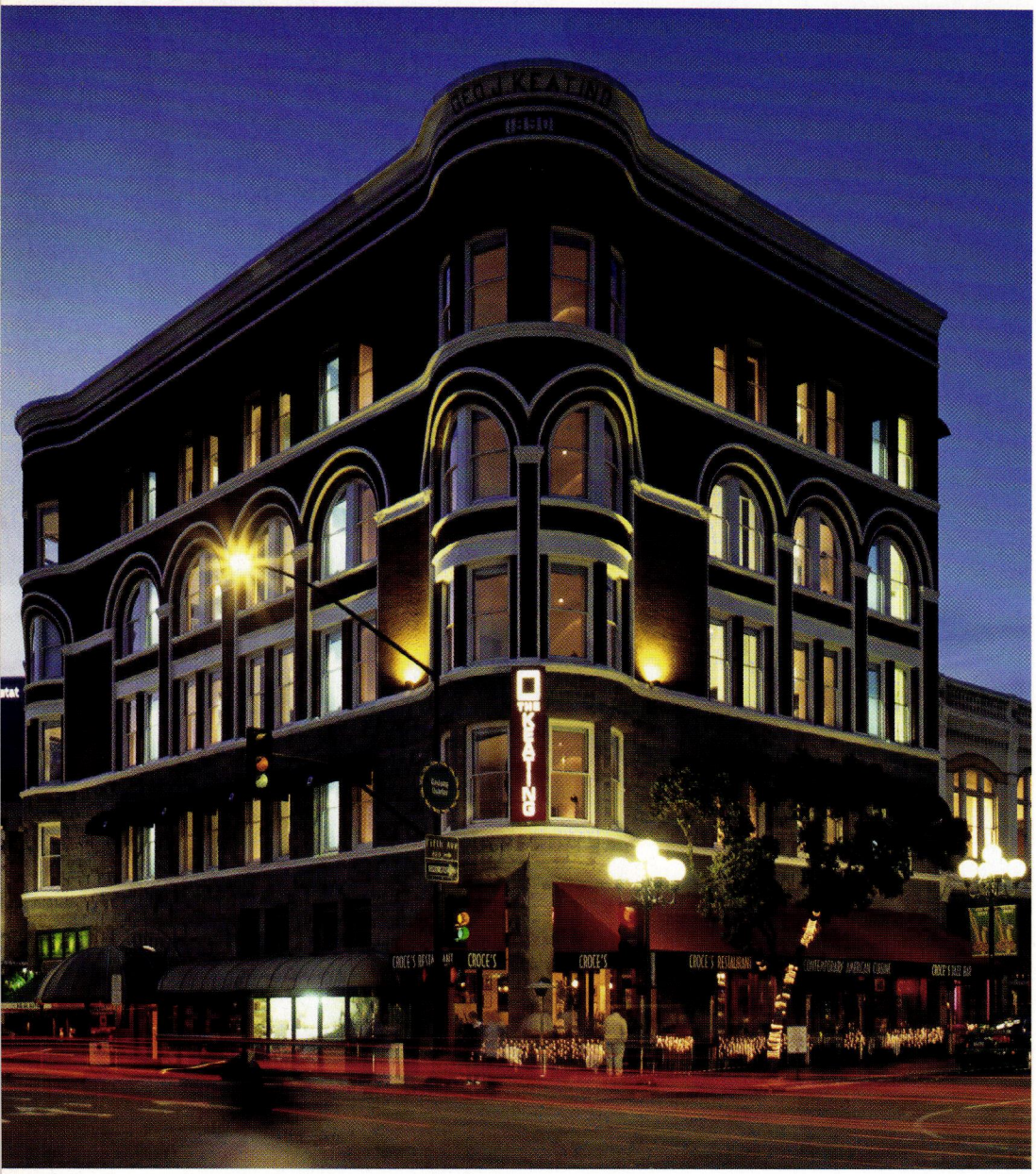
where

Location: Las Vegas, NV. *Total floor area*: 3,500 sq. ft. *No. of floors*: 2 Floors/Duplex. *No. of beds:* 4 beds.

sexy makes a comeback

With a racy design set in a nouveau San Diego neighborhood, The Keating Hotel by Italy's Pininfarina Extra brings a welcome, highly personalized edge to guest service

By Holly Richmond
Photography by John Linden



Pop singing icon Justin Timberlake may have brought "SexyBack" in 2006 with his chart-topping hit, but he has nothing on The Keating, San Diego's latest boutique hotel. A premium location in the city's trendy Gaslamp Quarter on the corner of 5th Avenue and F Street demanded a design that would create serious buzz. And if racy, sophisticated, modern design is the goal, it is hard to imagine anyone better to meet it than Pininfarina Extra, a division of the Torino, Italy-based Pininfarina Group, designers of luxury autos including Maserati and Ferrari.

The road was paved for success from day one in 2003 when Edward Kaen, principal and CEO of The Keating Hotel Group, purchased the 1890s five-story, 36,000-sq.-ft. building. Named for Fannie Keating, who developed the building as a tribute to her late husband George J. Keating, the Romanesque Revival building served as one of San Diego's most prestigious office spaces for nearly a century, with prominent occupants including AIA founder Henry Lord Gay and the San Diego Public Library. When Kaen saw the space, he was sure it could be revived as a unique boutique hotel. "As fate would have it, I was also shopping for a Ferrari at the time," he recalls. "I thought to myself, 'How better to play with the big boys in the hospitality industry than to find a designer that was fresh, high-end, and excessively detail oriented?'" The road led him straight to Italy for a meeting with Paolo Pininfarina, Pininfarina Extra's chairman and CEO.

Located in the burgeoning Gaslamp Quarter, within walking distance of modern amenities like the San Diego Convention Center and dozens of boutiques and restaurants, The Keating (left) proudly displays the building's original 1890's façade. Pininfarina Extra uses red as the prominent color in the lobby (opposite) to create a passionate atmosphere and express the highest level of contemporary Italian design.

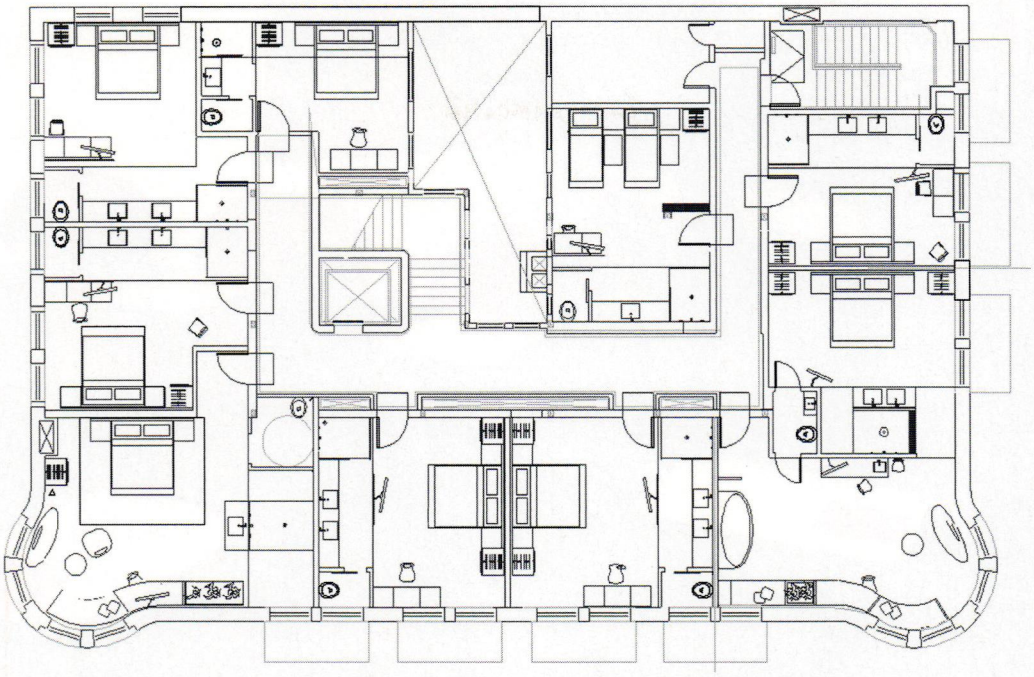
KEATING

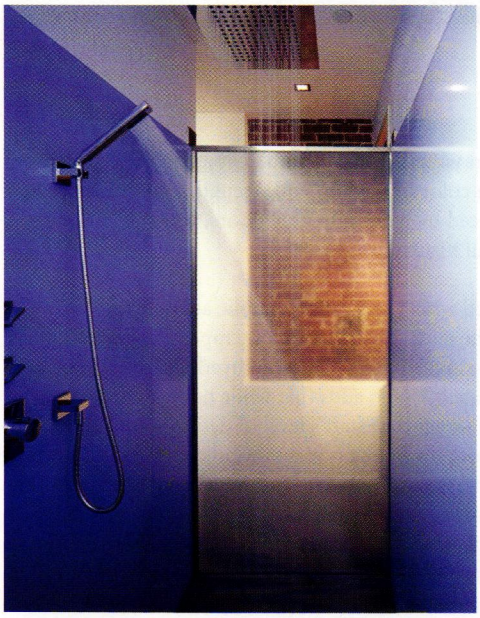
1890

After Kaen shared his vision for the space with Pininfarina, the design team began work on the firm's first-ever hotel project. Kaen remarks, "I'm from New York and love the city, and I wanted to bring that type of loft-like boutique hotel experience to San Diego." Pininfarina was happy to oblige, though there were a few tactical obstacles to overcome. "The main challenge was to understand within our team what a Pininfarina hotel should be. We were lacking any kind of reference," he notes. Pininfarina goes on to explain that the project was a logical step after 20 years of world-renowned work in industrial design. He took inspiration from several of the firm's clients including Snaidero, and of course, luxury automotives.

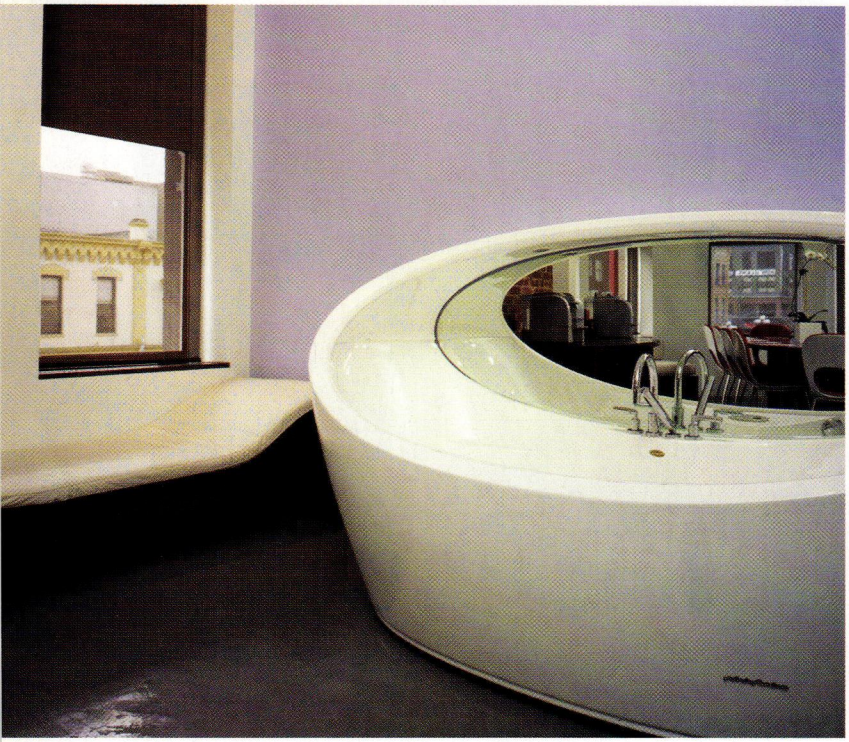
Each of The Keating's 35 *stanzas* (Italian for guestroom) and suites feature the superb qualities of Pininfarina's custom designs. All furniture, bath fixtures, and personal espresso machines are by Pininfarina. Other amenities include Frette Italian linens, Boca terry robes, and in-room entertainment systems boasting Bang & Olufsen HD plasma televisions, DVD players, and phones. Conceived without interior walls and featuring 15-ft.-high loft ceilings, the 290-sq.-ft. to 900-sq.-ft. rooms also create a new interpretation of space, taking away the traditional division between warm and wet zones, defined by Pininfarina as the bedroom and bathroom.

Kaen knew for the hotel to attract a young, hip crowd it had to have an eye-catching entrance and see-and-be-seen lounge. For the lounge, the building had the perfect thing—an original vault used by San Diego Trust & Savings Bank, one of the building's previous occupants. Since The Keating's grand opening on March 28, 2007, the lounge, called Minus One, has quickly become the ever-bustling social center of the hotel, encompassing a wine bar serving Italian small-plate specialties, cocktails, and





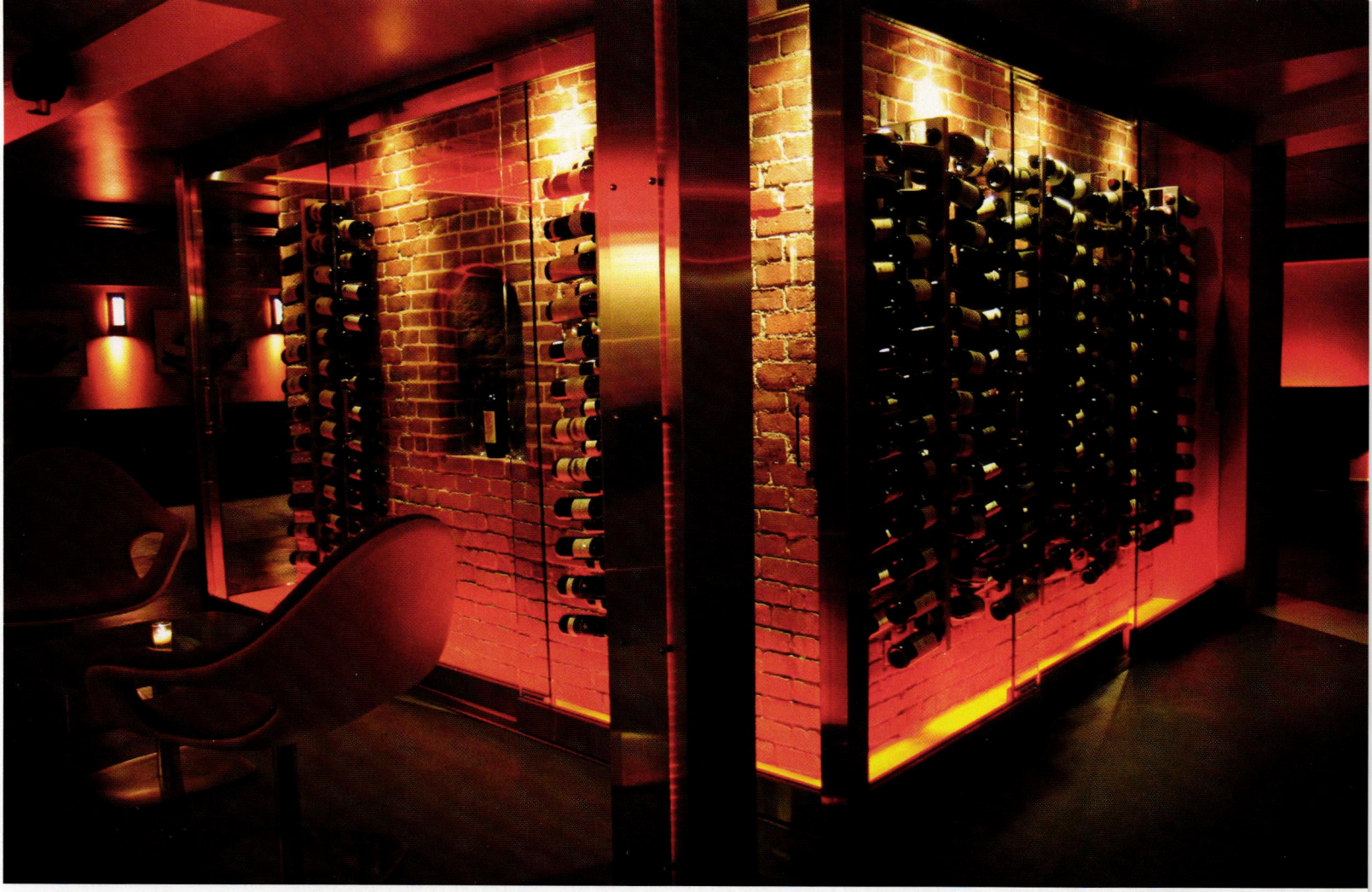
The modern Italian custom furnishings (opposite) in each of the The Keating's 35 stanzas and suites are punctuated by historical details including original red brick walls and battleship grey floors that pay homage to San Diego's rich nautical history. The custom designed glass shower's blue walls (above) contrast with the room's original exposed brick accents and also mimic the city's ever-present blue skies and vast ocean. Bathroom vanities are contemporary architectural design features with fixtures (right) by Dornbracht and amenities exclusively designed for The Keating.



Pininfarina-selected Italian wines. "I liked Paolo's choice to use red in the public areas because it is a color of passion and strength," says Kaen. "The strong red tones are balanced by battleship grey floors, which pay homage to San Diego's rich nautical history."

Pininfarina is just as pleased with The Keating's public areas, saying, "The lounge, in particular, has the perfect balance of contemporary design that is exciting, yet warm and relaxing. No detail has been overlooked, and I believe guests see this and appreciate it." Kaen adds that while he is thrilled with The Keating's high-end custom design, the staff's level of dedication to an equally personalized guest experience is what he is most proud of. "Guests love the overall vibe of the hotel, and we always hear about how wonderful the rooms are, but that's the easy part when you have a great design by a remarkable designer like Paolo," he explains. "Our guests are most impressed with the personalized service they receive. Being a small hotel, our reputation and success is based on word of mouth, so when guests say they will always stay at The Keating when visiting San Diego, that's priceless."

So is another hotel in the works for Pininfarina? "Eddie and I announced our agreement to establish seven more Keating hotels in important cities throughout the United States in the next five years," states Pininfarina. "This program is challenging and ambitious by itself. The rest of the world? Who knows?"



A quaintly chic conference room (opposite above and below), complete with food and beverage service areas, provides the ideal setting for small group meetings. The vault, originally used by San Diego Trust & Savings Bank, provides the ideal spot for the hotel's bustling lounge, Minus One (above), which like the lobby features a strong red color palette.

who

Project: The Keating Hotel. *Client:* The Keating Hotel Group. *Architect:* James Alcorn & Associates. *Interior designer, lighting designer:* Pininfarina. *Structural engineer:* SDSE. *Mechanical engineer:* Alpha Mechanical. *Electrical engineer:* Rossman. *General contractor:* Landmark Hospitality. *Photographer:* John Linden.

what

Paint: Custom by Pininfarina and Roman2000. *Flooring:* epoxy resin by Lifedeck. *Carpet/carpet tile:* Nourisan. *Guest room casegoods, beds, closets, couches:* Custom designed by Pininfarina, fabricated by Warisan. *Stainless steel vanities, resin sinks:* Custom designed by Pininfarina, fabricated by Stone & Steel. *Barstools, chaise lounges, chairs:* Custom designed by Pininfarina, fabricated by Revolver. *Stainless steel bar:* Custom designed by Pininfarina, fabricated by Crown Steel. *Liquor lockers:* Lobb. *Upholstery:* Fidivi. *Signage:* Stanford Signs. *Elevators:* Thyssen Krupp Elevator. *Window frames:* Original 1890 Historic Windows. *Window treatments:* Hunter Douglas. *Cushions:* Tempur-Pedic.

where

Location: San Diego, Calif. *Total floor area:* approximately 30,000 sq. ft. *No. of floors:* 5 (plus basement). *Average floor size:* 4,500 sq ft. *Number of rooms:* 35. *Total staff size:* 35. *Cost/sq. ft.:* $500.

fresh and modern

The Designer Collections floor and the Personal Shopping Suites at Holt Renfrew in Toronto get a welcome update, thanks to a design by burdifilek

By Sofia Galadza
Photography by Ben Rahn

A sculptural screen of clear and sandblasted Lucite cubes, solid oak with a hand-applied 18-karat gold dry-brushed finish, and porcelain are among the materials used in the Designer Collections area (above). Clothing is displayed on brushed-steel, floor-mounted fixtures that hang in line with the ceiling details (opposite).

Like the closets of well-heeled fashionistas, Holt Renfrew, Canada's premiere luxury retailer, needs occasional updates. The latest revamp took place at the downtown Toronto location. Local firm burdifilek, which specializes in luxury retail design, transformed the women's Designer Collections floor, as well as the Personal Shopping Suites. And while the two projects are separate and have their own distinct looks, they share unified elements that communicate the glamour and sophistication of the store locals call "Holts."

Diego Burdi, creative partner at burdifilek, is no stranger to Peter Moore, director of store planning and construction for Holt Renfrew. In 2003, burdifilek overhauled the main floor of the Toronto store. When it came to the Designer Collections floor and the Personal Shopping Suites, "We asked for luxurious materials that wouldn't compete with the merchandise," Moore recalled. And in the Suites, he adds, "we wanted to make it feel very residential and welcoming, as well as fresh and modern."

The circular forms—in both ceiling and lighting designs as well as in the sculptural installation of aluminum rods—compartmentalize the collections and create points of memory throughout the space (above). The corridor leading to the Personal Shopping Suites (opposite) is accessed through the Designer Collections floor.

The 16,000-sq.-ft. renovation of the Designer Collections floor came about because the area was basically a collection of separate rooms without a cohesive feel. Burdi took the O-shaped floor plate (with escalators coming up in the middle) and created three compartmentalized spaces. When shoppers arrive on the second floor, they find themselves in the middle of what Burdi calls "the piazza," a 7,000-sq.-ft. space. A sculptural installation—"a curtain" of 40,000 12-ft.-long aluminum rods painted white—winds through the space and delineates areas for various labels. Managing partner Paul Filek explains the concept for the overall space: "It's focused on pristine architectural forms and textured materials used in unexpected ways. Instead of complexity, the concept is based on simplicity and pure shape. Our goal was to evolve 'sculpture' from a static addition to a completed space to a place where it is hybridized into the architecture."

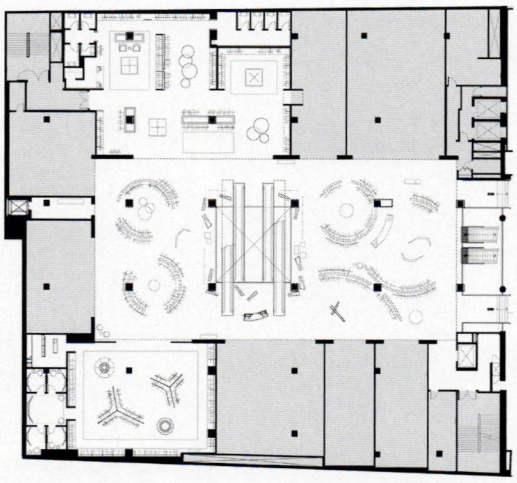
Sculpture and focus on materials extend to the perimeter of the floor plate. In a room along the perimeter featuring edgy creations by designers including Stella McCartney, solid oak tables with 18-karat gold dry brushed finish, along with aubergine-stained Tay wood and porcelain finished wall details, are among the luxurious materials. The adjacent room contains eveningwear by designers such as Oscar de la Renta and Vera Wang. "We wanted to have a lot more sparkle and make it a little bit more elegant. You'll see Lucite screens, hanging pendant candlestick lights, and lavender-colored floors."

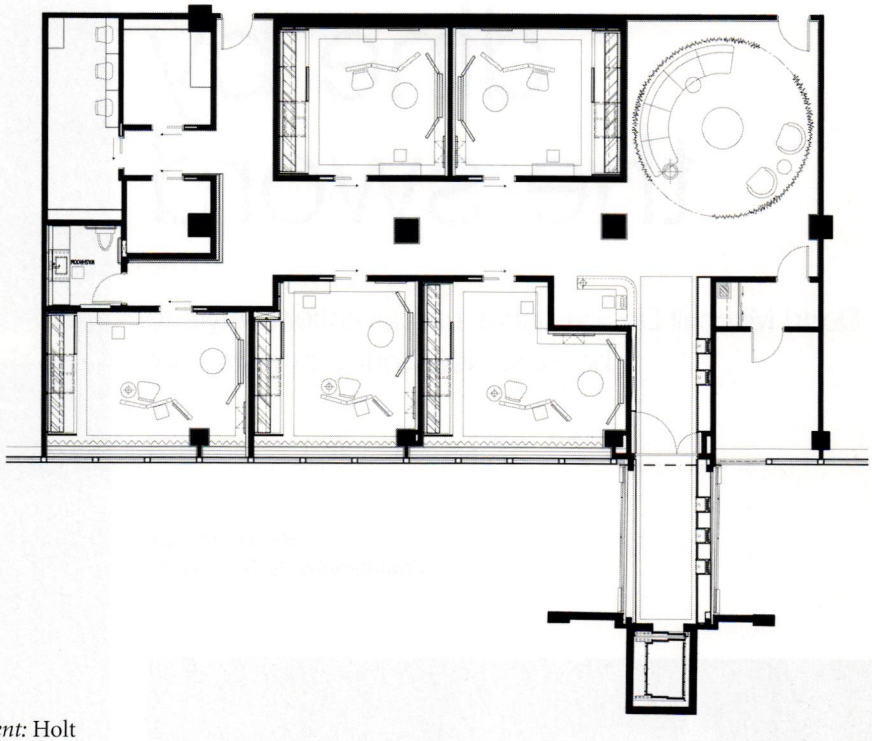
Clients pass through the Designer Collections floor to access the Personal Shopping Suites. Here, burdifilek transformed a 3,200-sq.-ft. section of Holt Renfrew's corporate offices into five suites and a reception area. "Previously, we had more traditional shopping suites [in another area of the store]. But the lighting wasn't very good, and we really wanted a more personalized environment," explains Moore. Adds Burdi: "We had to create an area where each room has a large wardrobe unit—a 'mini-theatre' where the personal shopper displays the outfits for the client—and seating for four people." But what sets this design apart from similar suites is the user's control over the environment. Each room has individual temperature and lighting control, so clients can try on merchandise while feeling and seeing what it will look like beyond the store. An added bonus: users have control over music selections and volume control. "It's all its own nucleus, per se," comments Burdi.

The aesthetic goal was to implement a color scheme that would both flatter the client and complement the ever-changing array of merchandise. White and grey prevail, while touches of lavender refract light and create a warm, flattering, glow. The flooring is a bleached beech wood with a whitewashed finish. Different custom designed carpets in each room range in hues from polar bear white to dove grey to light lavender. The oak wardrobe units have a grey finish. A textured wall finish by Moss and Lam contains crushed mother of pearl. And while the palette is simple, the textures offer variety. In addition, Burdi explains, "scale, proportion, and the effects of light on unexpected finishes all come together to create a distinctive enclave within the total store."

Even though the design team approached the Designer Collections floor and the Personal Shopping Suites as separate projects, "we needed some correlation between the two," says Burdi. The sculptural installations made with round aluminum rods in the retail area are similar to square polished stainless steel rods (in thicknesses ranging from 1/4 in. to 1/2 in.) used for the screen in the reception area. Another element that subtly unifies the designs of both spaces is the screen of clear and sandblasted Lucite cubes in the store. The corridor leading to the suites has a feature wall with polished flat bar metal bent into various square shapes. "These are from a similar family, but it's a different design method altogether," explains Burdi.

And how has Toronto's fashionable set responded? The personal shopping business has taken off. When the new suites opened last Fall, Holts had a team of just three shoppers. Now, says Moore, they're looking to increase the number to seven. "It's really being embraced. People love to come and use it. It's quite an experience." Indeed, creating an experience is a priority for both the design team and the client. "Our store planning mission is to ensure we are building a remarkable experience in every element, from the store design to the merchandise to the service," Moore explains. "It must all be impeccable." And with one glance at the final project, it looks as though Moore got what he wanted.





who

Project: Personal Shopping Suites and Designer Collections. *Client:* Holt Renfrew. *Consulting architect:* Young & Wright Architects. *Interior design:* burdifilek. *Lighting design:* Lightbrigade. *Consulting engineer:* MCW Consultants. *Structural engineer:* Yolles Partnership. *General contractor:* Mark Pickett (Personal Shopping Suites), Structure Corporation (Designer Collections). *Photographer:* Ben Rahn.

what

Wall treatments: Moss & Lam. *Paint:* Benjamin Moore. *Flooring:* Sullivan Source, York Marble, Connolly Marble, Petrous. *Carpet/carpet tile:* Custom/Sullivan Source. *Lighting:* Litemore, Nelson and Garrett. *Lucite:* Acrylic Fabricating Services. *Casegoods, seating, tables:* Custom. *Upholstery:* Primavera, Telio & Cie. *Hardware:* FSB. *Fixturing, metalwork, millwork:* Pancor Industries, Unique Store Fixtures. *Audio/Video:* Essential Communications. *Commissioned artwork:* Tatar Gallery. *Ceiling/drywall:* Gemtec. *Special finishes, commissioned artwork:* Moss & Lam. *Paint:* Benjamin Moore. *Wood sculpture:* Dennis Lynn. *Mechanical systems:* Classic Fire Protection. *Electrical systems:* The Electric Company.

where

Location: Toronto, Ontario. *Total floor area:* 3,268 sq. ft. (Personal Shopping Suites), 16, 160 sq. ft. (Designer Collections). *No. of floors:* 1.

The wardrobe unit in one of the personal shopping suites (opposite above) is a "mini-theater" where clients see the outfits they will try on. The chairs in the reception area (opposite bottom) were custom-designed to match the understated luxury in the space.

dine by the sword

Dodd Mitchell Design brings unconventional style to a hot new New York City restaurant

By Danine Alati
Photography by Eric Laignel

Dodd Mitchell sets the mood for The Kobe Club with tactile materials like the bar top covered in authentic stingray skin (above) and custom-made light fixtures (left).

While watching a film where a woman unlaced thigh-high boots with very long leather straps, Dodd Mitchell had a thought: Wouldn't that material make an interesting design element in a restaurant? And when high-profile New York restaurateur Jeffrey Chodorow commissioned him to design a new steakhouse named The Kobe Club, Mitchell instantly envisioned samurai swords—2,000 of them—protruding out from the leather-clad ceiling in a striking juxtaposition of materials.

Not only did Mitchell want to create something different from other restaurants in Manhattan, but he also wanted to design a space unlike any other he's done. "People think they get me, and then I switch it up and reinvent myself," he says. Walking from his hotel down in the Meatpacking district up to the midtown location of Kobe, Mitchell came up with the concept for the restaurant after having seen the space just once before. He wanted a sexy, sensual, moody vibe, which he achieved through the use of a very dark color palette of smoky greys, plums, and black tones and tactile materials like the leather-wrapped columns, ceiling, and walls and the stingray skin-clad bar top. Furniture is constructed of rough, purple heartwood and ebonized walnut. He says, "The hardest thing is creating something hot that's not trendy and can appeal to the age range of the clientele" —from young professionals to highly established executives.

Associated with luxury, the term "Kobe beef" has often been misused to include any beef bred from descendants of Japanese cattle, when in fact Kobe beef is only 100-percent Japanese Wagyu. The Kobe Club offers true Kobe beef, along with Australian and American Wagyu, and the restaurant's interi-

ors reflect its high-end menu. It's a scene, an event, not simply a place to dine. "We were seeking a vibe reminiscent of a speakeasy dinner club," Jeffrey Chodorow says of his latest restaurant venture, which opened in February. "One of my favorite design features is the 2,000 samurai swords hanging in the middle of the room, seeming to be dangling over the dining tables."

The perception of danger in the swords overhead adds to the sexiness of the space, according to Mitchell. Custom-designed lighting enhances the mood, as illumination comes through the swords, coruscating off each blade. "These swords in effect were dynamic art pieces; handcrafted objects of incredible beauty," Chodorow adds.

"I wasn't sure how people would take it," Mitchell says of his design scheme. "In L.A. people talk behind your back, but in New York they say it to your face," he jests. "I was nervous that people wouldn't get it. But at the opening people loved it. It's absolutely 100-percent different than any other production in New York, and it's 100-percent crazy—who hangs 2,000 swords?"

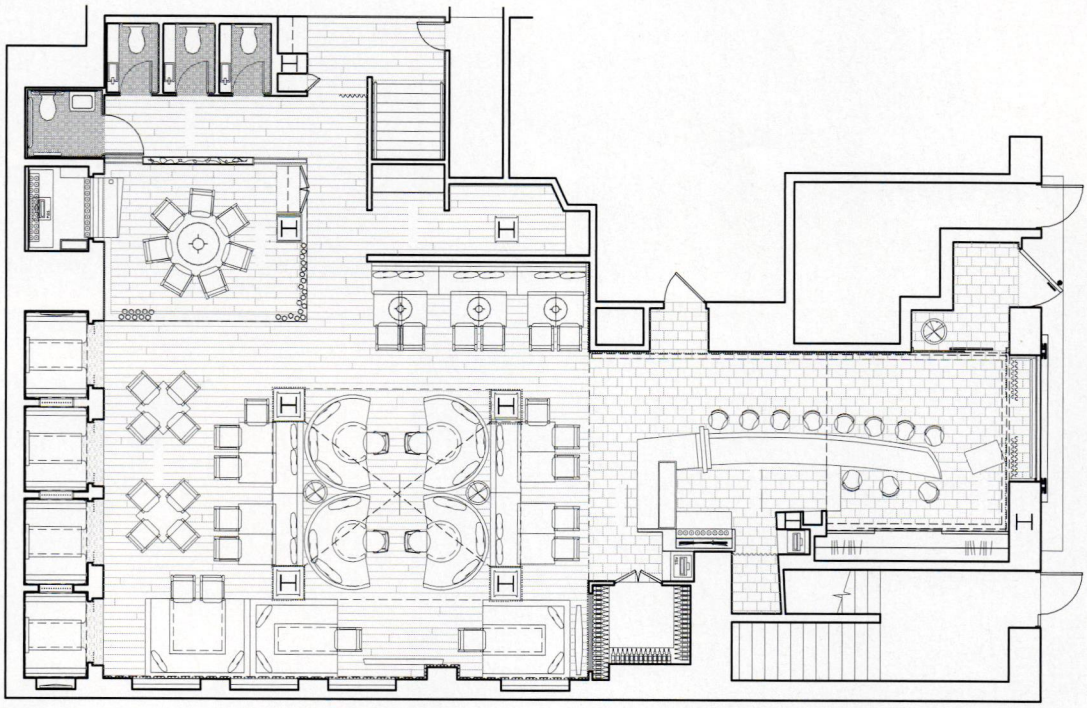
Apparently, Dodd Mitchell does. And it's just this type of risky, provocative, seductive design decision that make interiors like The Kobe Club such a stunning sensual, sensory experience. ◘

who
Project: Kobe Club. *Client*: China Grill Management. *Architect:* Chris Kofitsas, Mark Kibutu & Anthony Kiiru for New World Design Build. *Interior designer:* Dodd Mitchell Design (DMD); Dodd Mitchell, Christian Schulz, Ann Vering, Erni Taslim. *Structural/ mechanical/electrical engineer, general contractor:* New World Design Build. *Construction manager:* Bob Weber. *Food service consultant, restaurant supply contractor:* Russell Stillwell, Next Step Design. *Lighting designer:* Dodd Mitchell Design, Lori Goodman. *Furniture dealer:* Argent Custom Furniture. *Photographer:* Eric Laignel.

what
Paint, ceiling: Eva Buchmuller, New World Design Build. *Solid-core panels, dry wall, masonry, window frames:* New World Design Build. *Flooring, carpet/carpet tile, carpet backing:* Town & Country Flooring. *Lighting fixtures:* Custom by DMD, Lori Goodman, RSA. *Doors/hardware:* custom by New World Design Build. *Glass:* Precision Glass. *Window treatments:* Bridie Ferguson for Cachette. *Dining tables/chairs, lounge/cocktail seating/tables, banquette seating:* custom by DMD for Argent. *Lighting fixtures:* custom by DMD, Lori Goodman. *Upholstery:* Premiere Leather & Suede. *Window treatment:* Bridie Ferguson for Cachette. *Architectural woodworking/cabinetmaking*: Custom Wood Furniture. *Planters, accessories*: Bloom. *Signage*: Signs 2000. *Guest toilet plumbing fixtures:* Toto.

where
Location: New York, NY. *Total floor area:* 2,300 sq. ft. *No. of floors:* 2. *Total capacity by guests:* Total 108 (98 dining, 10 bar).

Decorative wall mirrors set above the banquettes (opposite top) contrast with the dark wood, sliced stone, and rich leather aesthetic (above). Inspired by the power and beauty of Japanese samurai swords, Dodd Mitchell decided to incorporate this iconic image into his design in the form of 2,000 swords (opposite bottom) hanging in the center of the room for a dramatic impact.



the art of banking

Set in Chicago's historic Tree Studios, Metropolitan Capital Bank brings custom banking to its clients with a redesign by OWP/P that revives a suffering interior

By Amy Milshtein
Photography by Chris Barrett, Hedrich Blessing

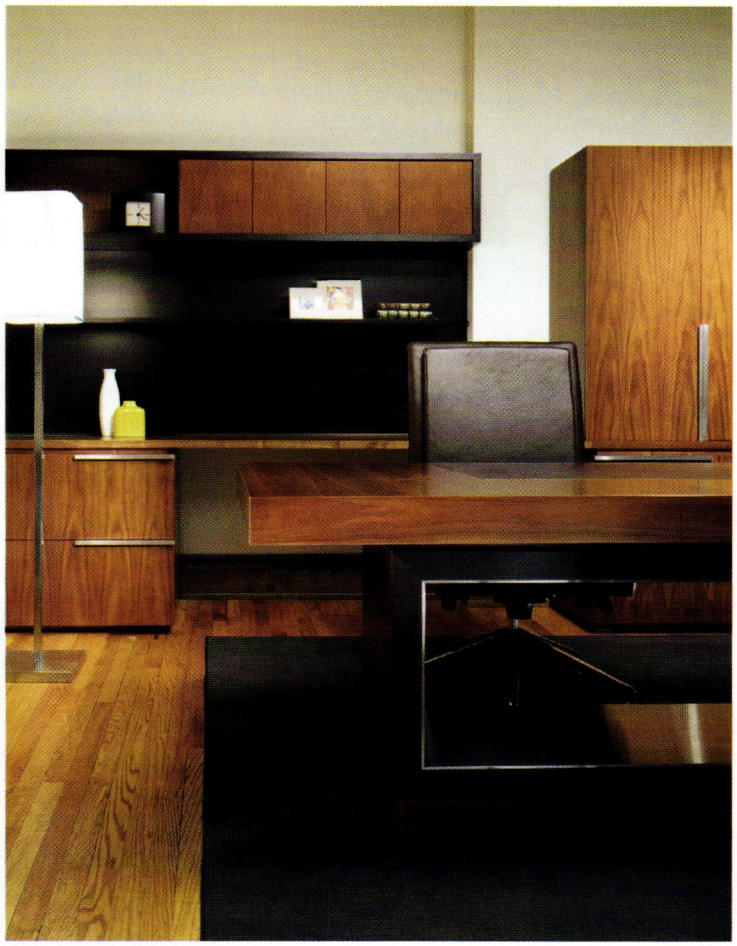
Symbiosis is a beautiful thing. In nature it's where two different organisms benefit and prosper because of each other. The same holds true in business. For example, just look to Metropolitan Capital Bank, housed in Chicago's historic Tree Studios: Thanks to an award-winning design by OWP/P, the studio has been restored to its former grandeur, while the new bank gains instant caché.

Commissioned in 1894 by art enthusiasts Judge Lambert and Anna Tree, Tree Studios is the nation's oldest surviving artist's studios. In its heyday, the Queen Anne style building housed artists, their studios, and their families. Its lush courtyard fostered communication, while big windows let in precious light to create a perfect setting. The studio was so successful that in 1912 and 1913 two annexes were constructed in the English Arts and Crafts style.

Tree Studios is on the National Register of Historic Places and is a Chicago landmark, but years of neglect produced the inevitable. By the time OWP/P brought its client to look at potential space, "it was in extraordinary disrepair," according to Michael P. Rose, chairman and CEO of Metropolitan Capital Bank.

Yet Rose saw through the leaks in the roof and the holes in the floors to what the North Annex could be and what it could do for his business. Positioned as a "personal CFO," Metropolitan Capital Bank assembles teams of professionals to help the affluent manage their capital. As a brand new company, Metropolitan could certainly benefit from Tree Studios' historic standing and longevity.

Metropolitan Capital Bank's reception area (opposite) sets the tone that this is not a bank that gives away a free toaster with every new account. Rich materials and custom furnishings complement the historic setting. Natural light is abundant in the old studio (right), but custom pendants lend impact and engage the space with a modern twist.



The view from above shows a coffee table embedded with plasma screens (above left). This marriage of turn-of-the-century and up-to-the-minute portrays Metropolitan perfectly. Custom furnishings like a muscular yet open desk (above right), add caché to the newly formed private bank. While there is no teller line at Metropolitan, people do make cash transactions. Comfortable surroundings and fireplaces (opposite) make those transactions more pleasant.

But first leaks had to be plugged and holes patched. "Renovating Tree Studios required dealing with 10 different agencies," recalls Stephen Citari, project manager and senior associate at OWP/P. "The entire exterior and half of the interior is landmarked so those areas were off limits." As an historic renovation, any new addition had to appear clearly new, which suited architect and client just fine.

"We needed to make the built space look warm, personal, and engaging," says Mark Hirons, project designer and director of design at OWP/P. "We achieved that with sculptural elements, contrasting materials, and custom furnishings."

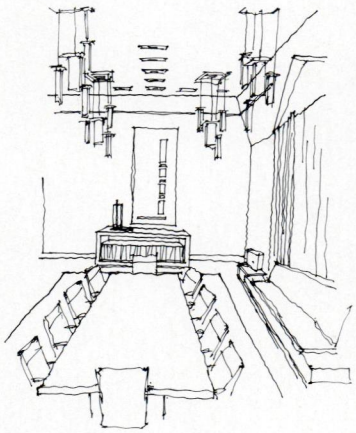
The blending of old and new starts at the entrance where OWP/P's clean, modern approach contrasts respectfully with the historic surroundings. A low reception desk, fashioned from a blend of metal and wood, greets visitors while a working fireplace—one of four in the space—provides cheer. Along with the furniture, lighting and rugs are custom crafted with a respectful eye to the Arts and Crafts style.

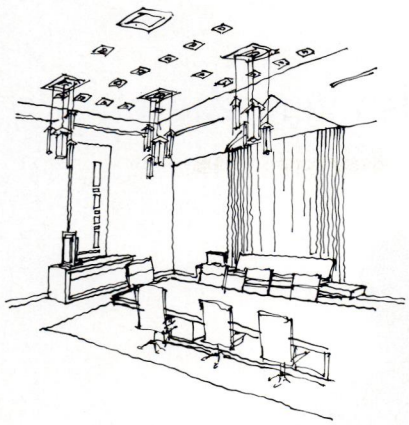
Yet one never forgets that this is a contemporary space built for the technological age. Over the historic mantle of that roaring fireplace sits artwork set off-center in a stainless-steel frame. But take another look—that's not a static work of art but a plasma screen with a display set to switch from art to bank information and back again. More plasma screens are embedded in the reception area's coffee table where clients can catch up on the news while awaiting their banker. "The table monitors create a beautiful, silent barrier between the people waiting and any cash transactions that need to be executed," explains Rose. "We don't have a teller line, but this draws the eye away while at the same time speaking to our technical proficiency."

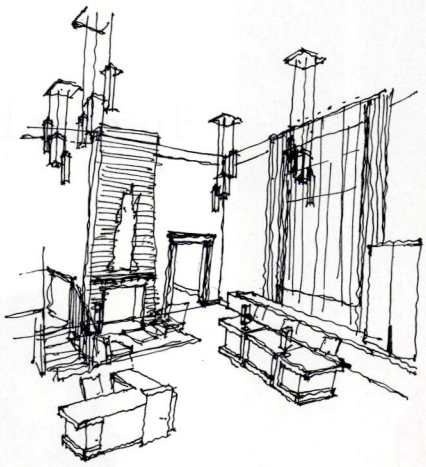
That level of custom comfort and technical proficiency is found throughout the two-story, 6,500-sq.-ft. space. OWP/P furnished offices and conference rooms with the same detail-oriented custom furnishings. Desks, for example, are muscular, angular creations of two kinds of wood and steel, yet their open modesty panels keep the pieces friendly and accessible.

Working within the confines of landmark status proved the project's greatest challenge and its most satisfying reward. "Staying true to the client's vision while meeting the oversights of all those groups was tricky," recalls Hirons. "Even something as seemingly simple as installing the furniture was more difficult."

But Hirons was rewarded by an invested client who took the architectural challenges seriously. So excited by his future office, Rose took time during a business trip to visit Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater. He came back inspired and gave Hirons the okay to build a signature furniture piece that originally fell off because of budget. Today a cantilevered custom bench sits in the conference room, providing a perfect perch for guests at Metropolitan's monthly art exhibits. Featuring local talent, the bank pays homage to the Tree Studio's historic past while allowing guests to mingle and network, all while increasing its own caché—proving again that mutual symbiosis is a beautiful thing. ■







who

Project, client: Metropolitan Capital Bank. *Architect, interior designer, lighting designer:* OWP/P; Mark Hirons, principal designer; Stephen Citari, project manager; Stephen Bruns; Alan Treuthart. *Structural engineer:* Tom Harrison, OWP/P. *General contractor:* Bulley & Andrews. *Furniture dealer:* Desks, Inc. *Photographer:* Chris Barrett, Hedrich Blessing.

what

Paint: Benjamin Moore. *Masonry, ceiling:* restored existing. *Flooring, doors:* refurbished existing. *Carpet:* Edward Fields; Constantine Commercial. *Lighting:* Custom pendants, manufactured by Winona Lighting. *Window treatments:* Kravet. *Workstations, conference tables, other tables, cabinetmaking:* Custom designed, manufactured by Decca. *Workstation seating:* Brayton. *Lounge seating:* Bernhardt. *Conference seating:* Herman Miller, Knoll. *Upholstery:* Edelman Leather. *Signage:* API. *Electrical:* proArc Electric. *HVAC:* Prairie Mechanical. *Plumbing:* Westside Plumbing.

what

Location: Chicago, IL. *Total floor area:* 6,500 sq. ft. *No. of floors:* 2, each with a mezzanine. *Average floor size:* 2,500 sq. ft. *Total staff size:* 15. *Cost/sq. ft.:* $185.

Turning heads everywhere...

The Mesa Chair

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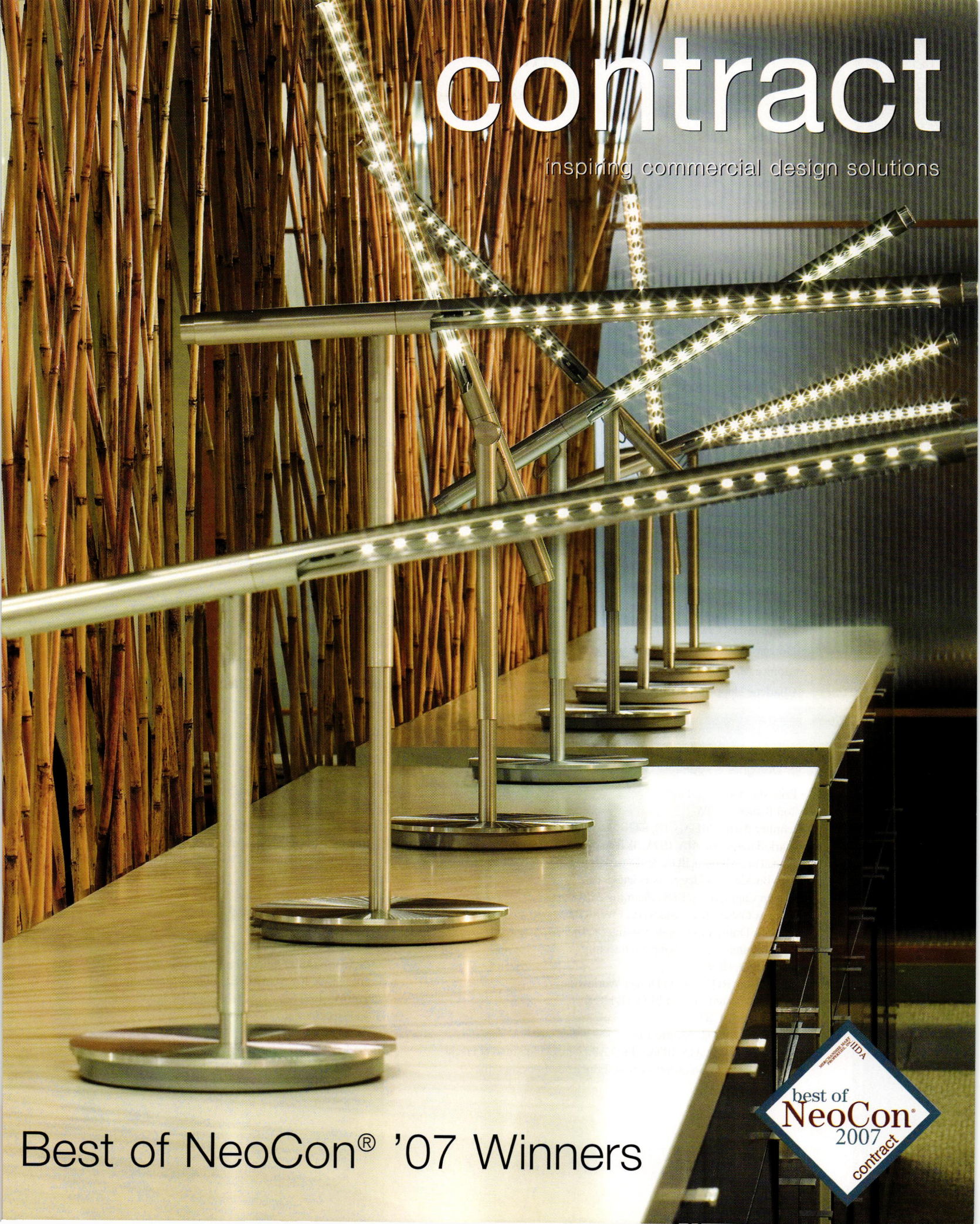

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best of NeoCon® 2007 contract

Best of NeoCon® 2007

Chicago—For the 18th time, the Best of NeoCon® competition highlighted the contract design industry's new products. This year, there were 420 entries in 40 categories, and 73 awards, including six Innovation Awards and four Editors' choice awards, were distributed. The 53 judges included corporate, government and institutional facilities management executives, as well as business facilities interior designers. The Best of NeoCon 2007 is sponsored by *Contract* magazine, Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc., McMorrowReport.com, the International Interior Design Association (IIDA), and the International Facility Management Association (IFMA).

The Best of NeoCon® 2007 Judges List

Facility Manager Jurors:

- Cynthia Alexander, The University of Michigan, College of Literature, Science and the Arts
- Brian D. Bennett, The Facility Group
- Gary Bonnell, AIA, IFMA, State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co., and Central Illinois Chapter of IFMA
- Greg Buse, Great Wolf Resorts, Inc.
- Jerry DiCola, IFMA, Brinks Hofer Gilson and Lione,
- Kristen Drewke, Baxter Healthcare Corp.
- Cynthia Dvorak, CFM, IFMA, Sidley Austin
- Phyllis Ewers, Cisco/CB Richard Ellis
- Doreen Fentress, Quality Technical Services Inc.
- Monica M. Gailus, Sargent & Lundy
- Charlene Happel, NIKE Space Planning, NIKE
- Kristi Hartwell, John Crane Inc.
- M. Alice Hogueisson, Edelman
- Joseph Lajeune, Abbott Laboratories
- Remi Loyer, SHELL Canada
- JudyLynn Monaco, Fresenius Medical Care North America
- Susan Monroe, The University of Michigan, College of Literature, Science and the Arts
- Dom Ruggerio, Ruggerio & Associates, Inc.
- Sue Schmidt, CPM, Healthways, Nashville
- David J. Solomon, Solomon Coyle
- BJ Thomas, Gateway Health Plan
- Charles Watkins, IFMA, PMI, ISM, Grant Thornton

Interior Designer & Architect Jurors:

- Erik Anderson, eight inc.
- Tod Babick, PLOW
- Jennifer Barnes, IIDA, CID, RTKL Associates Inc.
- Mark Baughman, AIA, IIDA, SKB Architecture
- Linda Porter Bishop, IIDA, ASID, AAHID, LEED AP ,WHR Architects, Inc.
- Jean Buckley, Buckley & Associates
- LuAnn Cagin, IIDA, RDG Planning & Design
- Maurya Cohan, RDA, Associate, OWP&P
- Leslie A. Dohr, Kahler Slater Architects, Inc.
- Royce Epstein, RDA, Hillier Architecture
- Rick Focke, HOK
- Amy Foster, RDA, FRCH Design Worldwide
- Anthony Garrett, IIDA, LEED AP, HOK
- Lois Goodell, CBT
- Susan Lee, PBC+L Architecture
- Jeffrey K. Liggett, AIA, IIDA, LEED AP Loebl Schlossman & Hackl
- Christopher Liu, Solomon Cordwell Buenz & Associates, Inc.
- Richard Mark, KlingStubbins
- Kathleen Peters, Arete3, Ltd.
- Maria A. Peterson, LEED AP 2.0, IIDA Associate, PBC+L Architecture
- Eileen Ragsdale, RDA, TPG Architecture
- Ronald A. Reed, IIDA, FAIA, Westlake Reed Leskosky Architects
- Fred Rieber, NELSON
- Bruce Sienkowski, 2B Studio, Ada
- Michael Sinkew, Ted Moudis Associates
- Rae Slater, RDA, Hillier
- David M. Standard, NELSON
- Sandy Steven, ASID Allied Member, Facilispace
- Thomas Stack, RA NCARB, IIDA, TPG Architecture
- William W. (Bill) Suk, AIA, Truisi Suk Design Group
- Bill vanErp, Gensler
- Ken Wachowiak, NELSON
- Kimberly Williams, KlingStubbins
- Cheryl Zehoski, CID, LEED® AP, Cuningham Group Architecture

Best of Competition

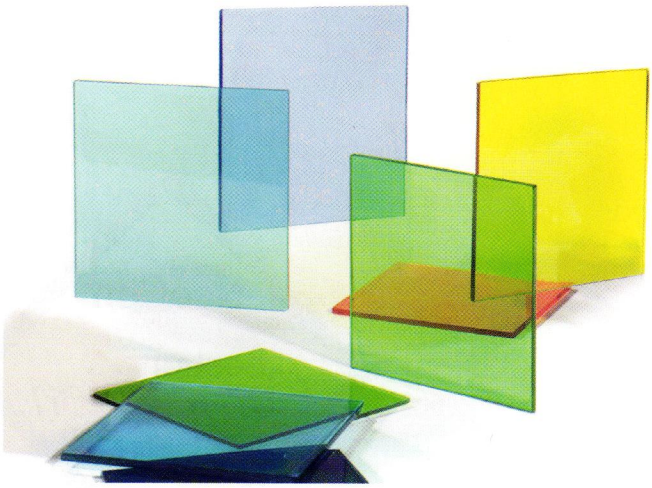
Haworth
Brazo

This year's Best of Competition award went to Haworth for the Brazo task light. Designed by Pablo Pardo of Pablo Designs in San Francisco, it has fully adjustable, calibrated light control and a precision quality machined recyclable aluminum body. Brazo offers functional design compatible with any environment and an LED light source that provides years of service with little maintenance.

With a slender and multi-adjustable arm, Brazo positions light in a linear fashion across any worksurface. The light's recyclable aluminum surfaces conceal luminous and energy-efficient LEDs. This functional design is also evident in the wave pattern element that acts as a heat sync to eliminate LED heat. The light also features 360-degree head rotation with 90-degree head adjustability, a height adjustment range from 14–21 in. and tangle-free wire rotation. Brazo has 18 high-powered LED lights with full dim control via its dimmer knob at the back end of the arm.

Perhaps most notable about the product is that it is the first task light to offer focus control—the simple rotation of the glass tube dial located at the front of the shade allows the user to both direct and choose any desired light spread. This makes Brazo ideal for use above computer monitors—the light source can be pointed at the work surface without producing light spill on the monitor surface. Circle No. 215

NeoCon® '07



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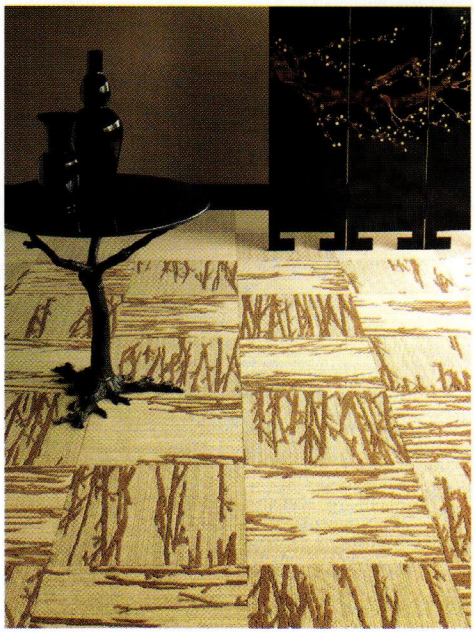

4.

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Gold and Silver

Architectural Products

1. Gold: 3Form
Color
Designer: Jill Canales, John Willham, Egan Metcalf
Circle No. 216

Carpet: Broadloom

2. Gold: Monterey Tandus
Bas Relief Grid & Rib Series
Designer: Suzanne Tick
Circle No. 217

3. Silver: Karastan Contract
Sensory
Designer: Shashi Caan, Shashi Caan Collective
Circle No. 218

Carpet: Modular

4. Gold: Shaw Contract Group
Dressed2Kill
Designers: Reesie Duncan, Marcy Ewing, Shannon Crump, Ashley Ginn, Sarah Miller
Circle No. 219

5. Silver: Bentley Prince Street
Saturnia Collection
Designers: Bentley Prince Street Design Team
Circle No. 220

Carpet Fiber

6. Gold: Antron Carpet Fiber
Antron Lumena solution-dyed nylon
Designers: Invista Commercial Color Development Team
Circle No. 221

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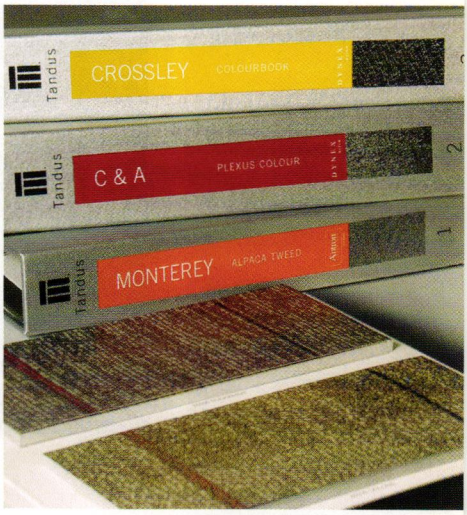

11.

Casegoods: Conference Room

7. Gold: Haworth
Planes
Designers: Haworth's Design Studio, led by Dan West, Daniel Figueroa in Bad Munder Germany
Circle No. 222

8. Silver: Gunlocke
Converge
Designer: Mitchell Bakker, IDa Design
Circle No. 223

Casegoods: Desks & Credenzas

9. Gold: Tuohy Furniture Corp.
Uffizi Collection
Designer: Archinet
Circle No. 224

10. Silver: Davis Furniture Industries
TIX
Designer: Dante Bonuccelli
Circle No. 225

Design Tools

11. Gold: Tandus
Inunison Virtual Sample Folders
Designer: Suzanne Tick and Terry Mowers
Circle No. 226

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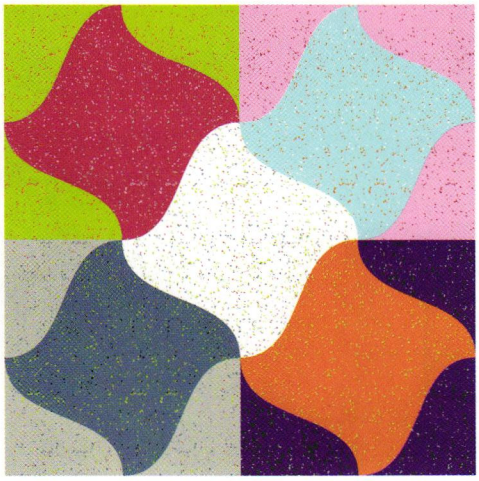


16.

12. Silver: Karastan
LE12 and Folio 54 Interactive Design
Designer: Karastan Contract
Circle No. 227

Education Solutions

13. Gold: StelterPartners
Vanerum Collection
Designer: Thomas Vanerum
Circle No. 228

14. Silver: Vecta
Akira Classroom Tables
Designer: Christian Cornelius
Circle No. 229

Flooring: Hard-Surface

15. Silver: Crossville, Inc.
Buenos Aires Mood
Designer: Barbara Schirmeister
Circle No. 230

Flooring Resilient

16. Gold: Tarkett Commercial
Karim Kolors
Designer: Karim Rashid
Circle No. 231

17.

18.

19.

17. Silver: Forbo Flooring Systems
Marmoleum Mineral & Dutch Design
Designer: Forbo Design Team
Circle No. 232

Furniture Systems

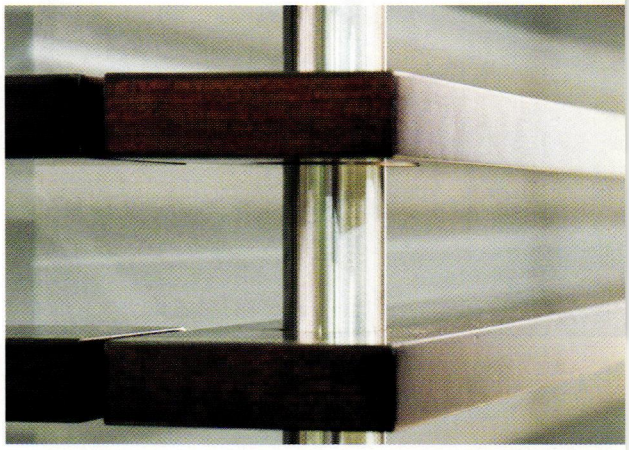
18. Gold: Teknion
Marketplace
Designer: Carl Gustav Magnusson
Circle No. 233

19. Silver: Turnstone
Tour
Designer: Kirt Martin
Circle No. 234

Furniture Systems: Enhancements

20. Gold: Industrias Riviera
Axis
Designers: Riviera/Arquimart Team, Israel Gomez
Circle No. 235

21. Silver: Knoll
Dividends Horizon
Designers: Jeffrey Bernett, Nicholas Dodziuk
Circle No. 236



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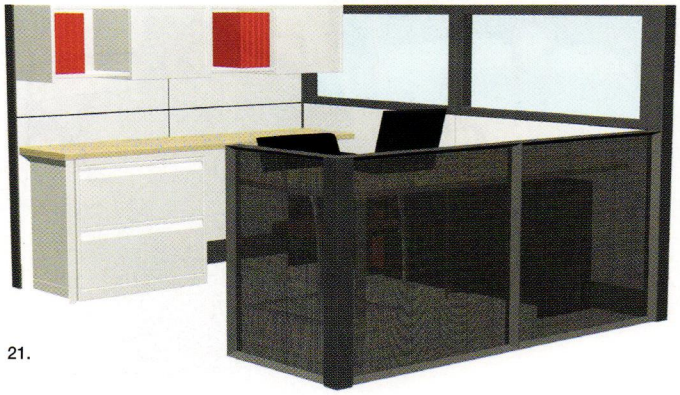

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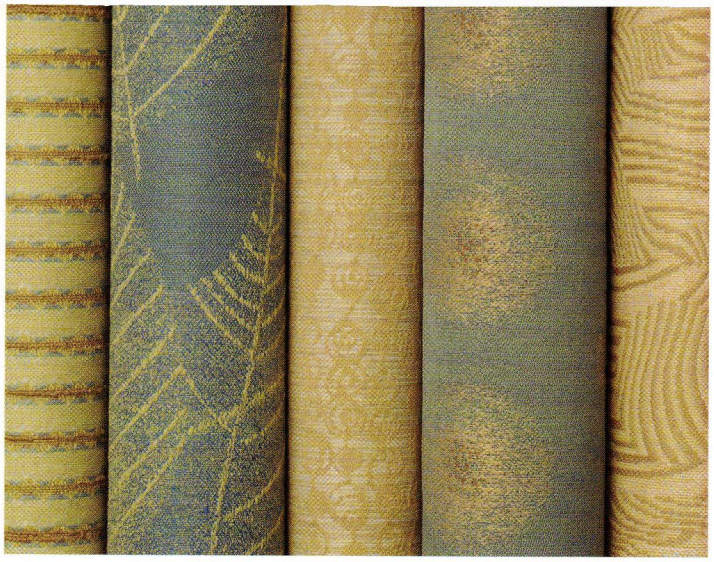

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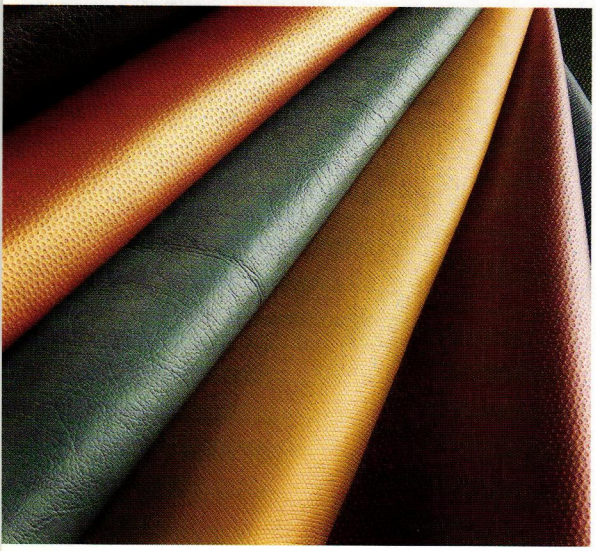

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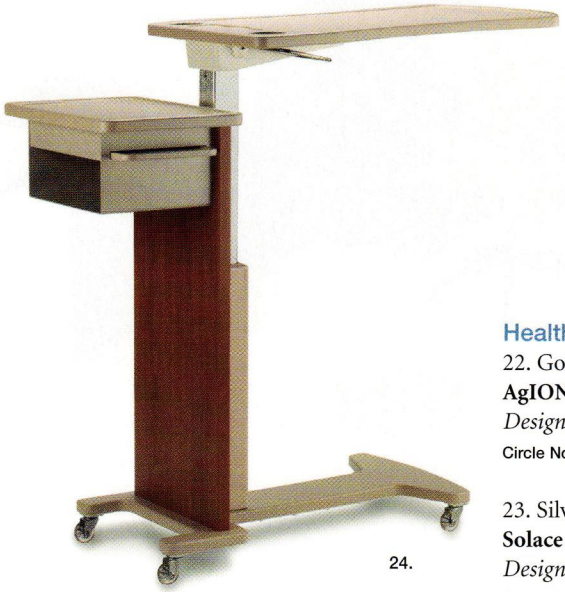


24.

26.

Healthcare: Fabrics

22. Gold: cf stinson
AgION Upholstery
Designer: cf stinson design team
Circle No. 237

23. Silver: Mayer Fabrics
Solace Crypton Green Collection
Designer: Lucia Kennerly
Circle No. 238

Healthcare Furniture

24. Gold: Nurture by Steelcase
Opus Overbed Table
Designer: Alan Rheault
Circle No. 239

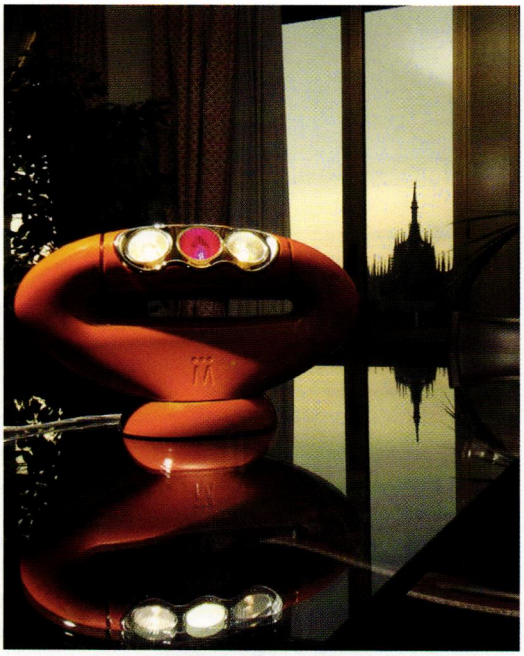
25. Silver: Krug
Jordan
Designers: Heinz Koller, Aaron Duke
Circle No. 240

Healthcare: Seating

26. Gold: Brandrud
Pause
Designer: Mark Kapka
Circle No. 241

27.

28.



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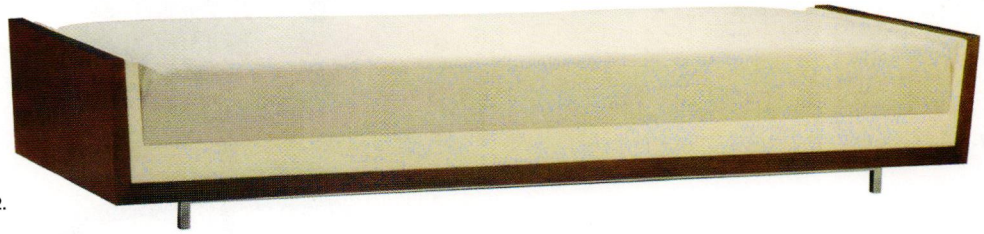

32.

27. Silver: Patrician Furniture
Narrative Sleep Sofa
Designer: Jim Barefoot
Circle No. 242

Healthcare: Textiles

28. Gold: Momentum Textiles
When I Grow Up
Designer: Sara Balderi
Circle No. 243

Lighting

29. Silver: Muvis
Anellum Light
Designer: Massimiliano Zoggia
Circle No. 244

Office Accessories

30. Gold: Humanscale
Switch Mouse
Designers: Manuel Saez, Maximo Diaz, Lachezar Tsvetanov, Brad Augustine
Circle No. 245

31. Silver: Egan Visual
Egan Versa Jot
Designer: Egan Design Team
Circle No. 246

Seating: Benches

32. Gold: Decca Contract
Rottet by Decca Bench
Designer: Lauren Rottet, FAIA
Circle No. 247

33.

34.

36.

35.

37.

38.

33. Silver: Jane Hamley Wells
Splinter
Designer: Matthew Kroeker
Circle No. 248

Seating: Conference

34. Gold: Interstuhl Bueromoebel
Axos
Designer: molldesign
Circle No. 249

35. Silver: Global—The Total Office
Global Accord
Designer: Zooey Chu
Circle No. 250

Seating: Guest

36. Gold: Bernhardt Design
Global Edition
Designers: Yves Behar, Arik Levy, Lievore Altherr Molina, Christian Biecher and Jeffrey Bernett
Circle No. 251

37. Silver: Davis Furniture Industries
Milano Series
Designer: Wolfgang C.R. Mezger
Circle No. 252

Seating: Ergonomic/Desk/Task

38. Gold: Steelcase
Amia
Designers: Steelcase Design Studio, Thomas Overtun, IDEO
Circle No. 253

39.

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42.

43.

44.

39. Silver: Davis Furniture Industries
BODY Chair Series
Designer: Burkhard Vogtherr
Circle No. 254

Seating: Sofas & Lounge

40. Gold: Leland International
Valeri Collection
Designer: Liévore, Molina, Altherr
Circle No. 255

41. Silver: Cabot Wrenn
Frameworks Radius Collection
Designer: Mark Goetz
Circle No. 256

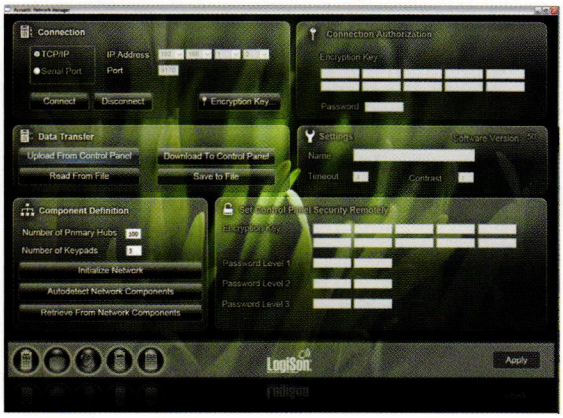
Seating: Stacking

42. Gold: Barcelona Seating Collection
Elena
Designer: Robby Cantarutti
Circle No. 257

43. Silver: Allermuir Limited
Soul
Designer: PearsonLloyd
Circle No. 258

Software Technologies

44. Gold: 20-20 Technologies
20-20 Office Sales 2008
Designer: The 20-20 Sales Software Development Team
Circle No. 259



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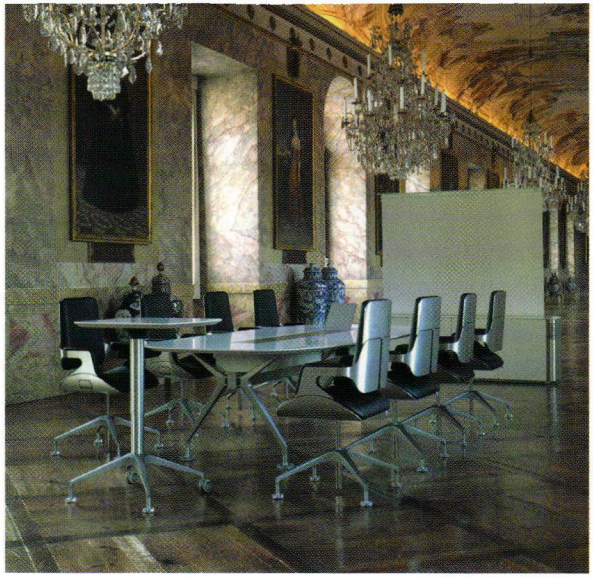

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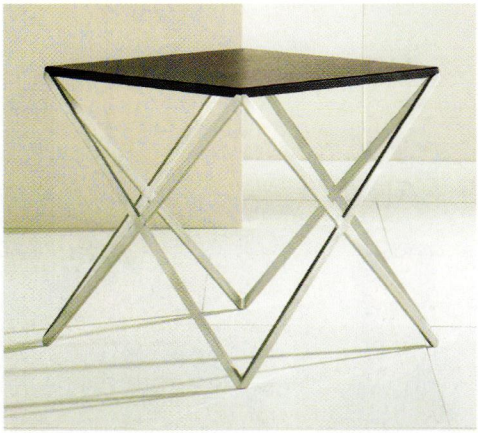


49.

50.

45. Silver: K.R. Moeller Associates Ltd.
LogiSon Acoustic Network Manager 2007
Designer: Peter Babineau
Circle No. 260

Tables: Conference

46. Gold: Gunlocke
Converge
Designer: Mitchell Bakker, IDa Design
Circle No. 261

47. Silver: Interstuhl Bueromoebel
Silver
Designer: Hadi Teherani AG
Circle No. 262

Tables: Occasional

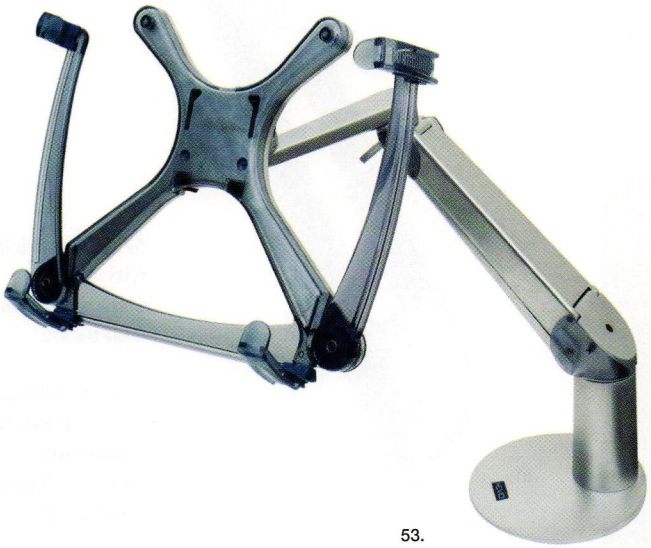
48. Gold: Decca Contract
Rottet by Decca
Designer: Lauren Rottet, FAIA
Circle No. 263

49. Gold: HBF
The Bias Series
Designer: John Hutton
Circle No. 264

50. Silver: Bright Chair Company
Madame X/Y
Designer: Douglas Levine
Circle No. 265

51.

52.



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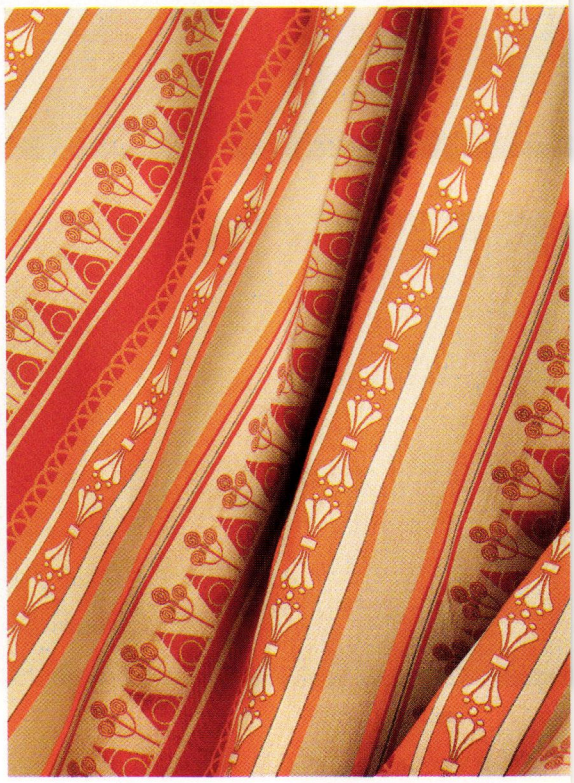


54.

Tables: Training

51. Gold: Vecta
Akira
Designer: Christian Cornelius
Circle No. 266

Technology Support

52. Gold: Eubiq
Eubiq Power Outlet
Circle No. 267

53. Silver: Innovative Office Products
EVO Tablet Arm
Designer: Bradley Derry
Circle No. 268

Textiles: Drapery

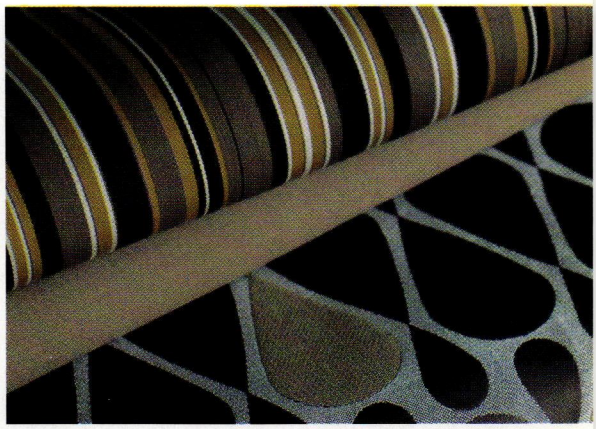
54. Gold: Architex
Biedermeier Collection
Designer: A Milwaukee Art Museum Collaboration
Circle No. 269

55. Silver: KnollTextiles
Mira & Cyclone
Designer: KnollTextiles Design Studio
Circle No. 270

Textiles: Upholstery

56. Gold: Luna Textiles
LUX[e]
Designer: Luna Textiles
Circle No. 271

55.



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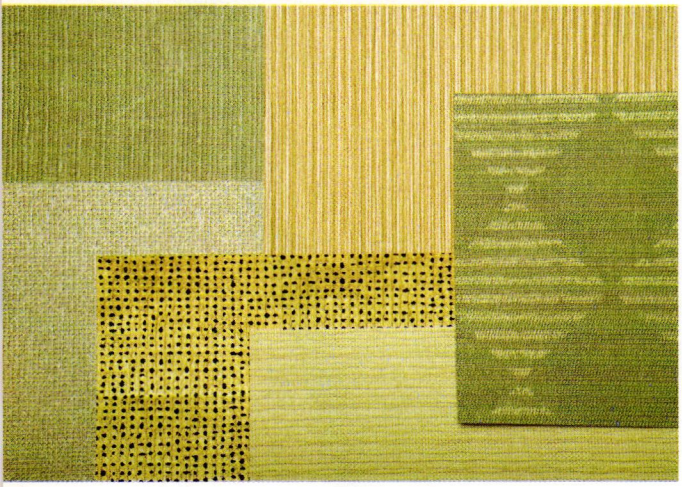

59.

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57. Silver: Edelman Leather
City Lights
Designer: Edelman Leather
Circle No. 272

Wall Treatments

58. Gold: KnollTextiles
Lusterware
Designer: Suzanne Tick
Circle No. 273

59. Silver: Wolf-Gordon
Organics
Designer: Wolf-Gordon Studio
Circle No. 274

Walls: Movable

60. Silver: Teknion
Optos
Designer: Teknion's in-house partnership with Iterby
Circle No. 275

Workplace Technologies: Height-Adjustable

61. Gold: Convia/A Herman Miller Co.
Convia Programmable Infrastructure
Designer: Herman Miller Creative Office in collaboration with Applied Minds
Circle No. 276

62. Silver: Herman Miller
C2
Designer: Insight Product Development
Circle No. 277

63.

64.

Worksurfaces: Height-Adjustable

63. Gold: Baker Manufacturing
NEXT
Designer: Tom Newhouse
Circle No. 278

64. Silver: Details
Series 7.1
Designers: Details Design in collaboration with Fredricks Design
Circle No. 279

Innovation Awards

65. Design Tools: Lees Carpets
Accelerated Design Systems
Designer: Lees Design Team
Circle No. 280

66. Textiles: Upholstery: Innovations
Odaka for Innovations
Designer: Fumiaki Odaka
Circle No. 281

67. Architectural Products:
Joel Berman Glass Studios
Ice
Designers: Joel Berman, assisted by Jason Brummet and Daniel Masse
Circle No. 282

68. Resilient Flooring: Constantine Commercial
First String
Designers: Bob Weiner, Cresta Martin
Circle No. 283

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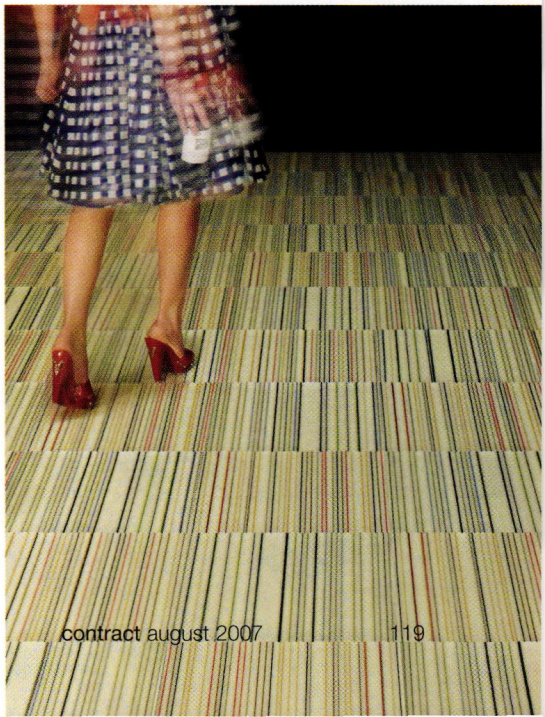

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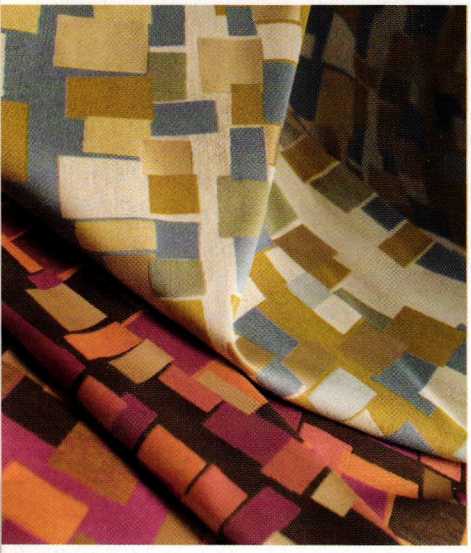

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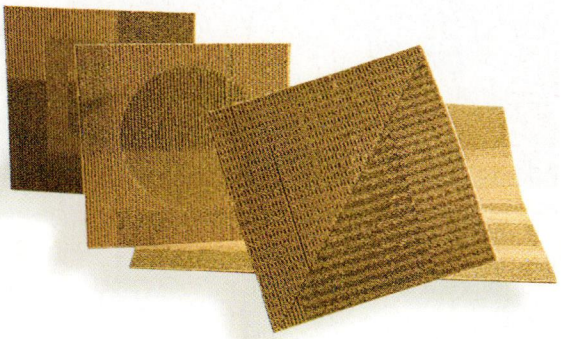

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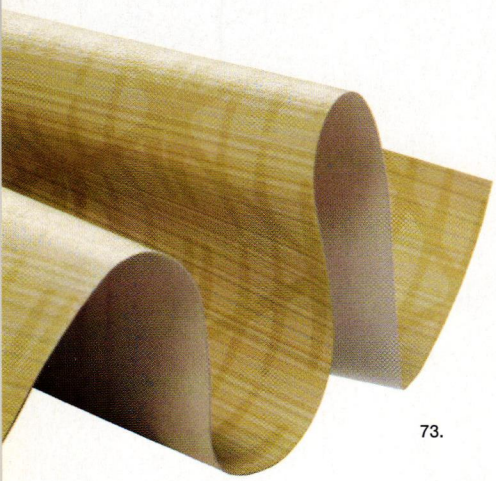

73.

74.

69. Healthcare Furniture:
IoA Healthcare Furniture
Oncology Care Chair
Designer: IoA Design Team
Circle No. 284

70. Sofas & Lounge Seating: Bernhardt Design
Global Edition
Designers: Yves Behar, Arik Levy, Lievore Altherr Molina, Christian Biecher, and Jeffrey Bernett
Circle No. 285

Editors' Choice

71. Modular Carpets: InterFLOR
Handloom Modular Carpet
Designer: David Oakey
Circle No. 286

72. Textiles: Upholstery: Momentum Textiles
L.A. on a Tank of Gas
Designer: Sara Balderi
Circle No. 287

73. Wall Treatments: Carnegie
Surface IQ
Designer: Heather Bush
Circle No. 288

74. Ergonomic Desk/Task Seating: izzydesign
Hannah Task
Designers: Dennis Foley, Jeffrey Gershune
Circle No. 289

TRANSFORMING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Sept. 27 & 28, 2007

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LAKE SUPERIOR PROVINCIAL PARK VISITORS CENTRE, REICH + PETCH DESIGN INTERNATIONAL

NeoCon® '07

winner profile

Company: Haworth

Product: Brazo

Category: Lighting

Brazo is a new task light with fully adjustable, calibrated light control and an aluminum, precision-machined body. The luminous and energy-efficient LED light source provides years of service with little maintenance.

From the jury:

Elegant simplicity with intuitive height adjustment.
More efficient than a compact fluorescent.
The two cylinders soften LEDs.
Dimmable without glare for personal adaptability.
Its architectural style fits all landscapes.

Turns heads 360°, too.
BRAZO™ looks incredible, but its precision-machined, multi-adjustable arm is really grabbing attention. Rotating 360°, adjusting 90°, and providing focus control of light spread, no other desk lamp gives the user so much control. It's no wonder BRAZO took NeoCon's top honor, Best of Competition. Brilliant.
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NeoCon® '07

winner profile

Antron® carpet fiber

Best of NeoCon 2007 Silver winner

Award-winning carpets of Antron® nylon include:

Company: Bentley Prince Street

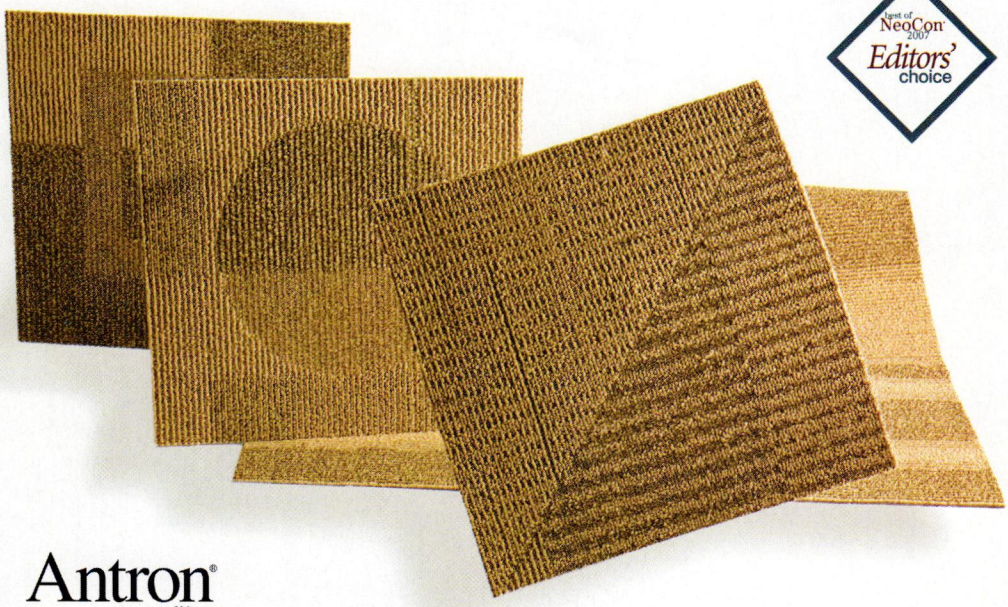
Product: Saturnia Collection

Category: Carpet: Modular

Saturnia is health, beauty, and wellness with soothing aesthetic, revealing and stylizing what we see everyday. A collection of 16 patterns come in tile and broadloom for the hospitality, higher education and corporate market.

From the jury:

Lots of colors, amazing tone-on-tone leaf pattern.
Collection complete and well thought-out.
Finally a tile that can masquerade as a broadloom.
Keeps with design philosophy of Bentley.
Great price point makes it a doable choice for corporate.



Antron® carpet fiber

Best of NeoCon 2007 Editors' choice

Company: InterfaceFLOR Commercial

Product: Handloom Collection

Category: Carpet: Modular

Available in four distinct textures and 10 coordinating patterns, the Handloom Collection combines a modern, woven style with sleek, detailed designs. Handloom comes in 18 elegant colorways.

From the jury:

Very subtle pattern and color; nice texture.
Patterns are successful for corporate applications.
Nice texture and seams well.
Good choice for monolithic look.
Good color selection.

NeoCon® '07

winner profile

Company: INVISTA

Product: Antron Lumena® solution dyed nylon

Category: Carpet: Fiber

Antron Lumena® solution dyed nylon, now available in 200 colors, offers superior performance in commercial environments. It withstands stains, offers excellent appearance retention, and is EPP certified.

From the jury:

Innovative technology for solution dyed fiber.
Brilliant colors!
Much needed improvement for solution dyed fibers
Incredible color selection.
It's always nice to have choices.

Antron®
carpet fiber

NeoCon® '07

winner profile

Company: Architex

Product: Biedermeier Collection

Category: Textiles: Drapery

The Milwaukee Art Museum's Biedermeier exhibition is the basis for a new line of Architex multipurpose textiles. Architex chose motifs from exhibition pieces to inspire its twist on Biedermeier-styled textile designs.

From the jury:

Very nice interpretation of Biedermeier style.
Color combinations quite attractive.

BIEDERMEIER

Textiles inspired by the Biedermeier exhibition showing at the Milwaukee Art Museum; the Albertina, Vienna; Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin; and the Louvre, Paris.

MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

Architex®
architex-ljh.com
800.621.0827

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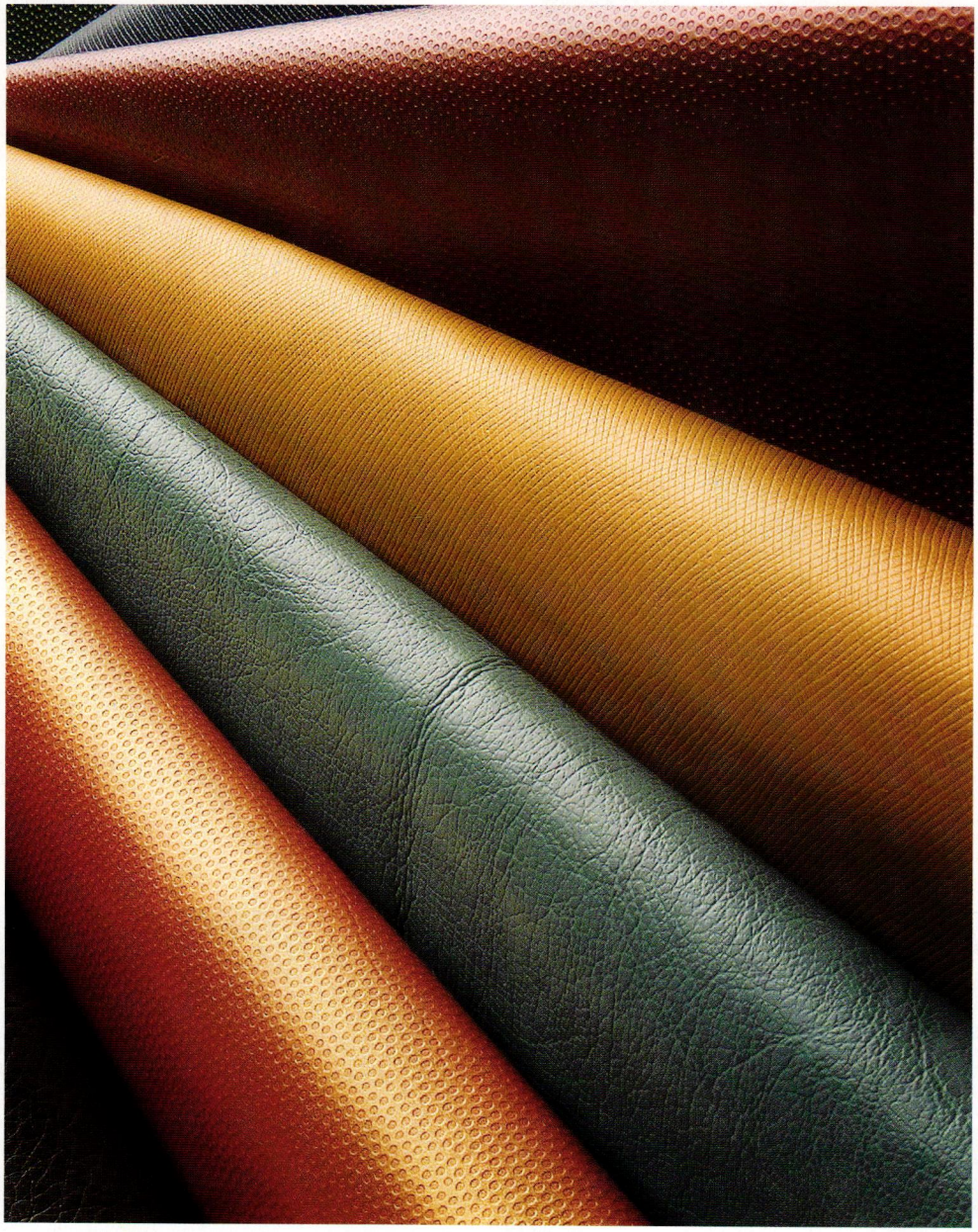
NeoCon® '07

winner profile



Company: CF Stinson, Inc.

Product: AgION Upholstery Collection

Category: Healthcare: Fabrics

PVC-free upholstery with its own built-in immune system, AgION® is a patented, safe, antimicrobial technology that actively targets bacteria on the protected surface of the upholstery for the LIFE of your furniture.

From the jury:

Self-cleaning fabric.
FDA and EPA listed.
Pretty and pretty smart.
4 patterns, broad color range.

Upholstery with its own immune system . . .

Introducing pvc*free*™, high-performance upholstery that resists microorganisms and bacteria for the life of your furniture. Agion® (silver ion) is a patented, long-lasting, safe, broad spectrum antimicrobial technology that actively targets microorganisms and bacteria on the protected surface of the upholstery. Agion® antimicrobials (as an additive) are EPA-registered and FDA-listed. **Isn't science beautiful.**

agion®
Nature's antimicrobial

Visit cfstinson.com or call 800.841.6279

cfstinson

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NeoCon® '07

winner profile

Company: Luna Textiles

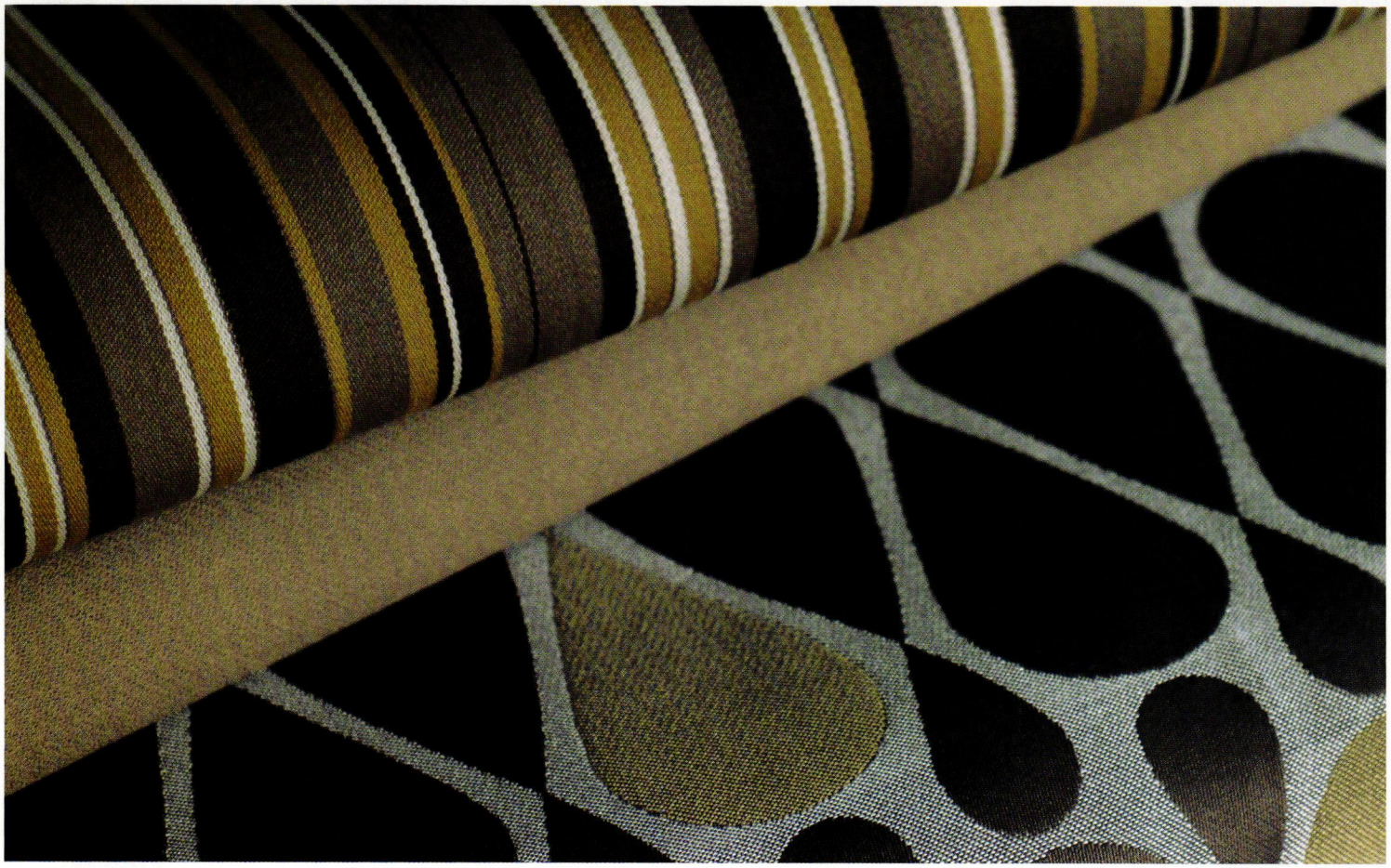
Product: LUX[e]

Category: Textiles: Upholstery

LUX[e] is an ensemble of five upholsteries for contract interiors. LUX[e] brings together the elegant design aesthetic Luna is renowned for with environmentally sustainable solutions necessary for today's spaces.

From the jury:

Very nice pattern and scale; good colors.
Elegant look, expensive feel, appropriately understated.
Even the funkiest pattern stays within boundary of good taste.
Good story and great design; elegant depth of color.
Very nice sustainable line with good aesthetics.



LUNA TEXTILES: FABRICS FOR CONTRACT AND HOSPITALITY INTERIORS

2415 THIRD ST SAN FRANCISCO 94107 TEL 415.252.7125 LUNATEXTILES.COM

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NeoCon® '07

winner profile

Company: Shaw Contract Group

Product: Dressed2Kill

Category: Carpet: Modular

Dressed2Kill tile is more than a background element of interior architecture; it is a means to confront the definition and identity of a space, challenging your definition of design. Design is provocative.

From the jury:

Well integrated with broadloom.
Great functionality at low cost.
Tremendous flexibility and elegance.
Beautiful, nice design story and great colors.
Pleasing patterns, coordinated, refined, artistic.

"Beach rocks inspire endless patterns. The Haven design could easily look like a tidal pool or an aerial view of an island."
—Angela Adams
imagine a landscape indoors
design is imagination
angela adams
shaw contract group
shawcontractgroup.com
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NeoCon® '07

winner profile

Company: Tarkett Commercial

Product: Karim Kolors

Category: Flooring: Resilient

Designed by Karim Rashid for Azrock's homogeneous commercial tile line, Karim Kolors offers a striking visual with a clean pattern and bright colors that catch the eye.

From the jury:

An ability for new pre-cut shapes is fantastic.
Wow! Great colors.
Appreciate the higher impact resistance.
Multiple configurations are great.
So innovative for a floor vinyl material.

We've got flooring squared away

tartan for Azrock

"Now design is not about solving problems, but about a rigorous beautification of our built environments."
-Karim Rashid

best of NeoCon® 2007

We're celebrating our 75th year by thinking outside the square. Visit our website to view our award-winning products and latest offerings.

www.tarkett-commercial.com

75 YEARS
AZROCK® by Tarkett

STAND ON EXCELLENCE

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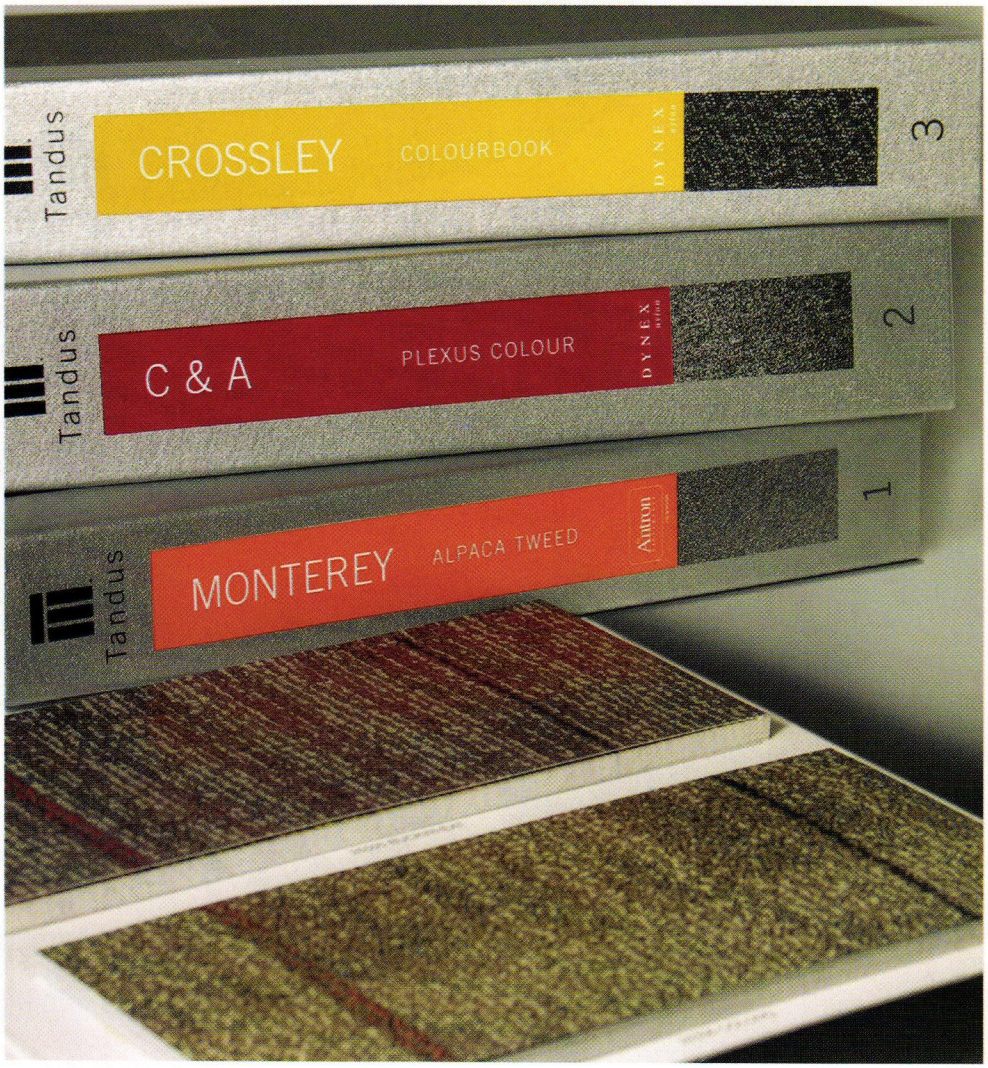
NeoCon® '07

winner profile



Company: Tandus

Product: Inunison Virtual Sample Folders

Category: Design Tools

A revolutionary reincarnation of the sample book for running line contract styles from the three Tandus brands, the virtual sample folder minimizes the need for physical samples while providing a complete sample experience.

From the jury:

Excellent way to save energy; avoid waste; cost-efficient.
Great for preliminary selection; better than SIMs.
Well thought-out system of displaying carpet colors.
Photo image easier to archive in a file with all specs.
Great for use on presentation boards.

NeoCon® '07

winner profile

Company: Tandus

Product: Bas Relief Rib- Bas Relief Series

Category: Carpet: Broadloom

Suzanne Tick's latest study in woven broadloom carpet structure, the Bas Relief Series features volumes of extra large, twisted yarn bundles that form a flat background, as in sculpture.

From the jury:

Intriguing, innovative, different, an "area rug"-like product.
No one else is providing such a product.
Addresses changing needs in workplace.
Defines space by setting off small area within a large space.
Recognizes the needs for a collaborative work area.

NeoCon® '07

winner profile

Company: Tuohy Furniture Corp.

Product: Uffizi Collection

Category: Casegoods: Desks & Credenzas

Inspired by European kitchen design, Uffizi embodies elegance, refinement, and functionality in an intensely rigorous work environment…one's office. Our workplace deserves beauty, as a significant life-place.

From the jury:

An office of this furniture would make a great statement.
Great style and sophisticated detailing; innovative, unique.
Combined beauty and function; simple, streamlined look.
Great idea of remote control locks.
Innovative concept of kitchen conveniences to office application.

UFFIZI

CASEGOOD COLLECTION

DESIGN: **ARCHINET**

TUOHY FURNITURE CORPORATION

1159 MERCHANDISE MART, CHICAGO

T: 800.533.1696 E: INFO@TUOHYFURNITURE.COM

W: WWW.TUOHYFURNITURE.COM

TUOHY

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NeoCon® '07

winner profile

Company: Vecta

Product: Akira

Category: Tables: Training

Akira is a stylish, full line of multipurpose room tables with a patented mechanism that makes it the easiest-to-use flip-top table on the market.

From the jury:

Intelligent wire management; height adjustable. Amazing folding mechanism.
Ease of use; engineered at its best; good problem solving. Nesting ability. Neoprene modesty panel.

Company: Vecta

Product: Akira Classroom Tables

Category: Education Solutions

Akira is a stylish, full line of reconfigurable classroom tables with a patented mechanism that makes it the easiest-to-use flip-top table on the market.

From the jury:

Innovative mechanisms make it easy to simply flip the top with one hand.
The legs turn when the top is flipped up.
Neoprene modesty panel is very nice.
I like that it has two base styles—a T-base and L-base with modesty panel. Height-adjustable option for ADA; wire management.

akira

the art of the simple fold

VECTA

1800 South Great Southwest Parkway
Grand Prairie, Texas 75051
T: 972 641 2860 F: 972 660 1746

www.vecta.com

Best of NeoCon 2007 Gold winner

Best of NeoCon 2007 Silver winner

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NeoCon® '07

winner profile

Company: Davis Furniture Industries, Inc.

Product: TIX Office *(opposite page)*

Category: Casegoods: Desks & Credenzas

The TIX Office, a new furniture concept, unites functional and aesthetic at the highest level of the corporate environment in solid wood for the initial attraction and aluminum accents for the final adornment.

From the jury:

Great! Completely new approach and aesthetic.
Phenomenal new expression of wood desking.
Substantial in size yet quite efficient footprint.
I like the environmental story; sustainability is achieved.
Natural oiled wood finish is refreshing.

Company: Davis Furniture Industries, Inc.

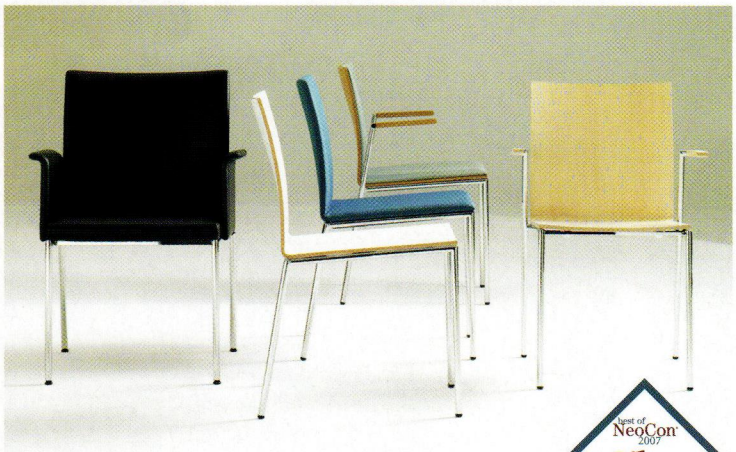
Product: BODY Chair Series

Category: Seating: Ergonomic Desk/Task

The BODY Chair incorporates a minimalist European design with a sculptured frame that connects to the mechanism rather than the arms. This opens many possibilities for different back and arm applications.

From the jury:

Clean lines and well-thought-out visual statement.
User friendly, intuitive controls, and adjustments are well designed.
Very comfortable in a sleek, minimal design.
Three arm selections, flexible seat pan, high back.
Gas cylinder integrated into base—very sleek.



Company: Davis Furniture Industries, Inc.

Product: Milano Series

Category: Seating: Guest

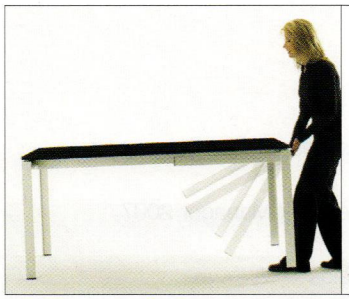
The Milano Series pushes bent plywood technology to the max to create an extremely tight radius bent-plywood shell. This lightweight chair is the epitome of a classic architectural statement.

From the jury:

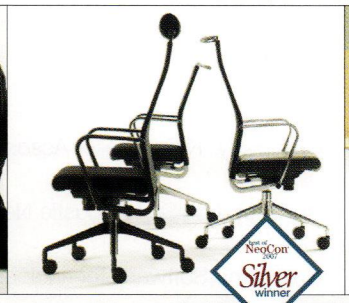
Well-scaled, proportioned, and detailed.
Can work for spaces that require a small footprint.
Does not compromise comfort and function.
Beautiful detailing, and variety of designs makes it specifiable.
Great price point, versatility, and attention to detail.

design *is* a choice

seating . . . desking . . . tables



BASIC
designed by Bolzern Greutmann
licensed from B&W



BODY
designed by Burkhard Vogtherr

MILANO
designed by Wolfgang C.R. Mezger
licensed from Brunner

NYO
designed by Justus Kolberg
licensed from Lamm

Silver winner

TIX
designed by Dante Bonuccelli
licensed from Mobimex

DAVIS®

Davis Furniture Ind. Inc. *Tel* 336 889 2009 *Fax* 336 889 0031 www.davisfurniture.com

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NeoCon® '07

winner profile

Company: K.R. Moeller Associates, Ltd.

Product: LogiSon Acoustic Network Manager 2007

Category: Software Technologies

LogiSon Acoustic Network Manager's CAD interface allows users to design the layout of the sound masking, paging, and music system and use this custom visual interface to locate and control components—an industry first.

From the jury:

Robust adjustment capabilities, flexible zoning.
A well-implemented control method.
Allows independent volume/frequency adjustments.
Can upgrade this software often and economically.
Built using NET technologies-new industry standard.

LogiSon®
ACOUSTIC NETWORK

Four-Time Winner!

In both 2003 and 2006, the LogiSon® Acoustic Network earned Silver in the Workplace Technologies category. In 2006, the Remote Manager™ Software won Gold in the Software Technologies category, while Acoustic Network™ Manager took Silver in 2007.

Acoustic Control
At Your Fingertips™

KRM has been in business for 30 years and focuses exclusively on developing and manufacturing sound masking technologies. The LogiSon® Acoustic Network is the company's – and the industry's – leading system.

Small zone sizes and precise control allows custom design for the unique acoustical conditions presented by different spaces. The output of individual or groups of speakers can be conveniently managed from a control panel, PC or handheld computer.

All zones are software-based rather than hardwired. Adjustments can be made in minutes, without accessing the ceiling or altering cabling.

1.866.LOGISON **www.logison.com** **info@logison.com**

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NeoCon® '07

winner profile

Company: Krug

Product: Jordan

Category: Healthcare Furniture

Jordan—defined as a "healing river" in ancient times—utilizes research-based curvature in both the seat and back to encourage correct yet comfortable sitting posture, with pronounced support for the lumbar region.

From the jury:

Easy to get in and out of.
Antimicrobial protection built into lacquer finish.
Leg design keeps chair away from wall.
Tables are non-handed; can gang easily w/out disassembling anything.
Good pronounced back support and moisture barrier.

JORDAN MULTIPLE SEATING

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GUEST

PATIENT

BARIATRIC

LOUNGE

HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS

krug

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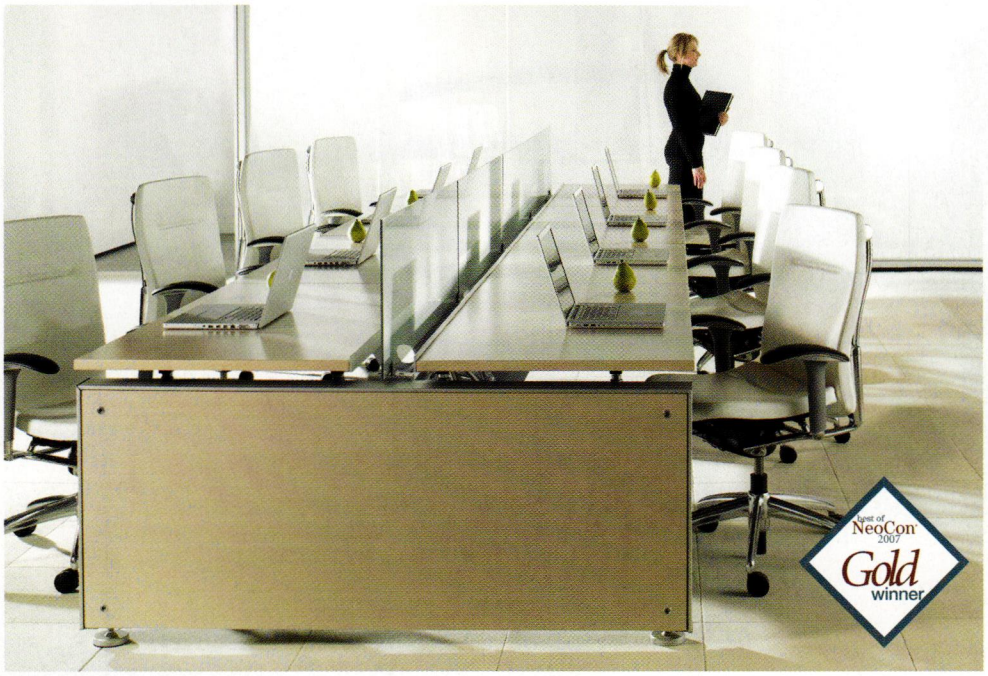
NeoCon® '07

winner profile



Company: Teknion

Product: Marketplace

Category: Furniture Systems

Marketplace represents the evolution of the worktable, a simple, rational response that changes the landscape of the interconnected office and helps companies attract the knowledge workers that drive innovation.

From the jury:

Introduces European "Benching Systems" to the United States.
Central truss works well in keeping knee space unobstructed.
Lighting canopy gives identity to individual space.
Variety of materials possible is great.
Industrial kit of parts; struts prevent wire fallout.

Company: Teknion

Product: Optos

Category: Walls Movable

The Optos glass wall system is ideal for full-height space divisional applications requiring a refined, virtually transparent design aesthetic, and flexible leveling tolerances. Optos also supports LEED accreditation.

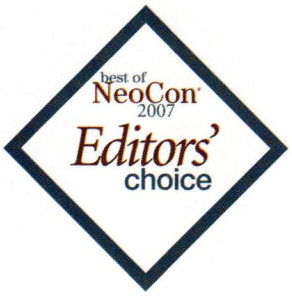
From the jury:

Clean design with easier installation than standard construction of a glass wall.

Teknion
03
Reinventing the work table
www.teknion.com
Small moves, big shift
Teknion Marketplace
Circle No. 105 on reader service card or visit ContractMagazine.com

NeoCon® '07

winner profile



Company: Carnegie

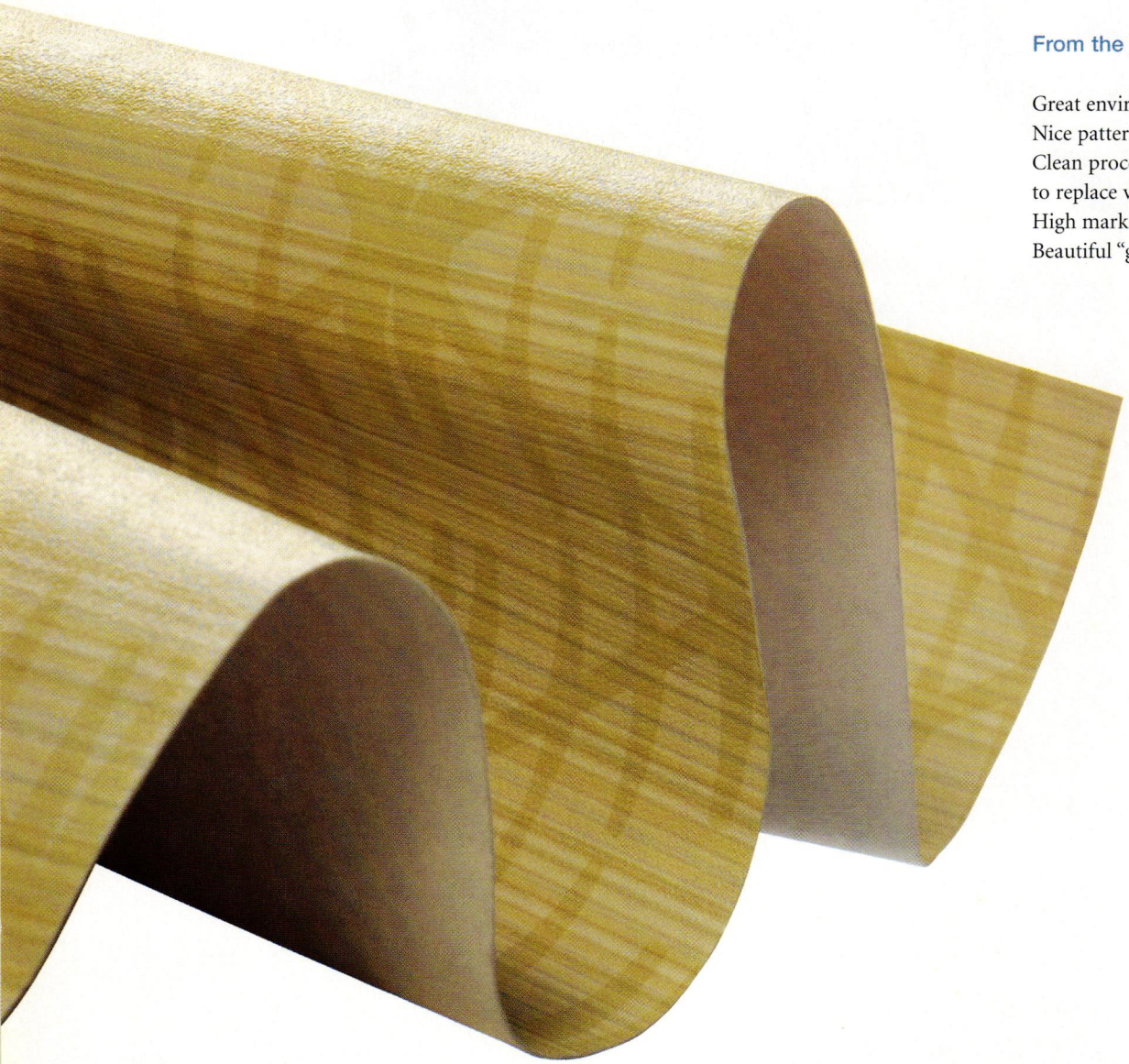
Product: Surface IQ

Category: Wall Treatments

Surface IQ is a breakthrough wallcovering technology. Built on thermoplastic olefin technology, it delivers performance, ecology, and aesthetics.

From the jury:

Great environmental statement.
Nice patterns and colors.
Clean process; good to see a technology to replace vinyl.
High marks for innovation of sustainable traits.
Beautiful "green" product.



PVC FREE TO THINK
imaginatively

SURFACE | iQ

WALLCOVERING

carnegiefabrics.com

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NeoCon® '07

winner profile

Company: IoA Healthcare Furniture

Product: The Oncology Care Chair

Category: Healthcare Furniture

The Oncology Care Chair provides comfort, warmth, and support to patients undergoing chemotherapy, adressing important clinical and emotional needs within a clean and understated design.

From the jury:

Antimicrobial vinyl, latex, and recyclable foam in seat.
Good research in regard to patient.
Great mechanisms and convenience features.
Clearly designed to offer comfort.
Magnetic side panel to controls.

IOA

Cardiac Care Chair

Annina Series

Kangaroo Full House

Chicago Headwall Series

PROVIDING DESIGN SOLUTIONS TO HEALTHCARE
THROUGH PRODUCT INNOVATION

www.ioa-hcf.com

The Stay Collection for overnight visitors.

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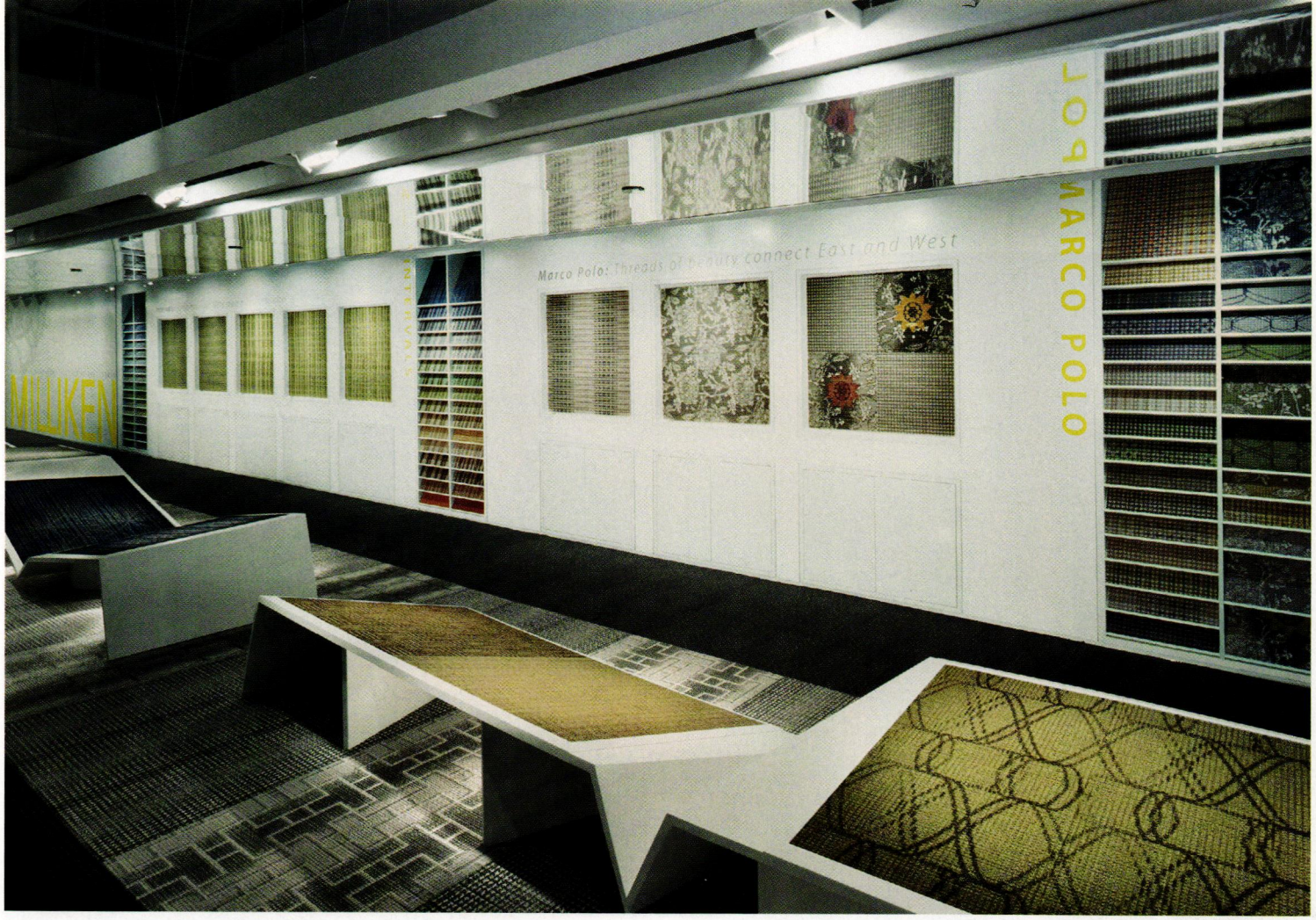
IIDA Showroom Competition

Product introductions are not the only reason attendees visit NeoCon®, as manufacturers continue to impress with new designs for both permanent showrooms and temporary booth spaces. In 2007, the International Interior Design Association (IIDA) again teamed up with *Contract* to co-sponsor the Annual IIDA Showroom & Booth Design Competition, honoring this year's most creative spaces. Entrants were judged on originality of design; visual impact; effective use of materials; use of space (creativity, product accessibility, and other factors); use of color and textures; lighting; and graphics. The A-list of jurors included commercial interior design professionals Sean Kendig, IIDA, TVS Interiors, Chicago; Thomas Stack, IIDA, TPG Architecture, Melville, N.Y.; Viveca Bissonnette, IIDA, and Thomas Lehn, IIDA, Carrier Johnson, San Diego; John Mack, IIDA, HLW International, New York; Kelly Warfield, IIDA, Gensler, Dallas; Hem Chowdhry, IIDA, Atlas Architects, Houston; and Kay Wulf, IIDA, TVS Interiors, Chicago. Five exhibitors walked away with a prize.

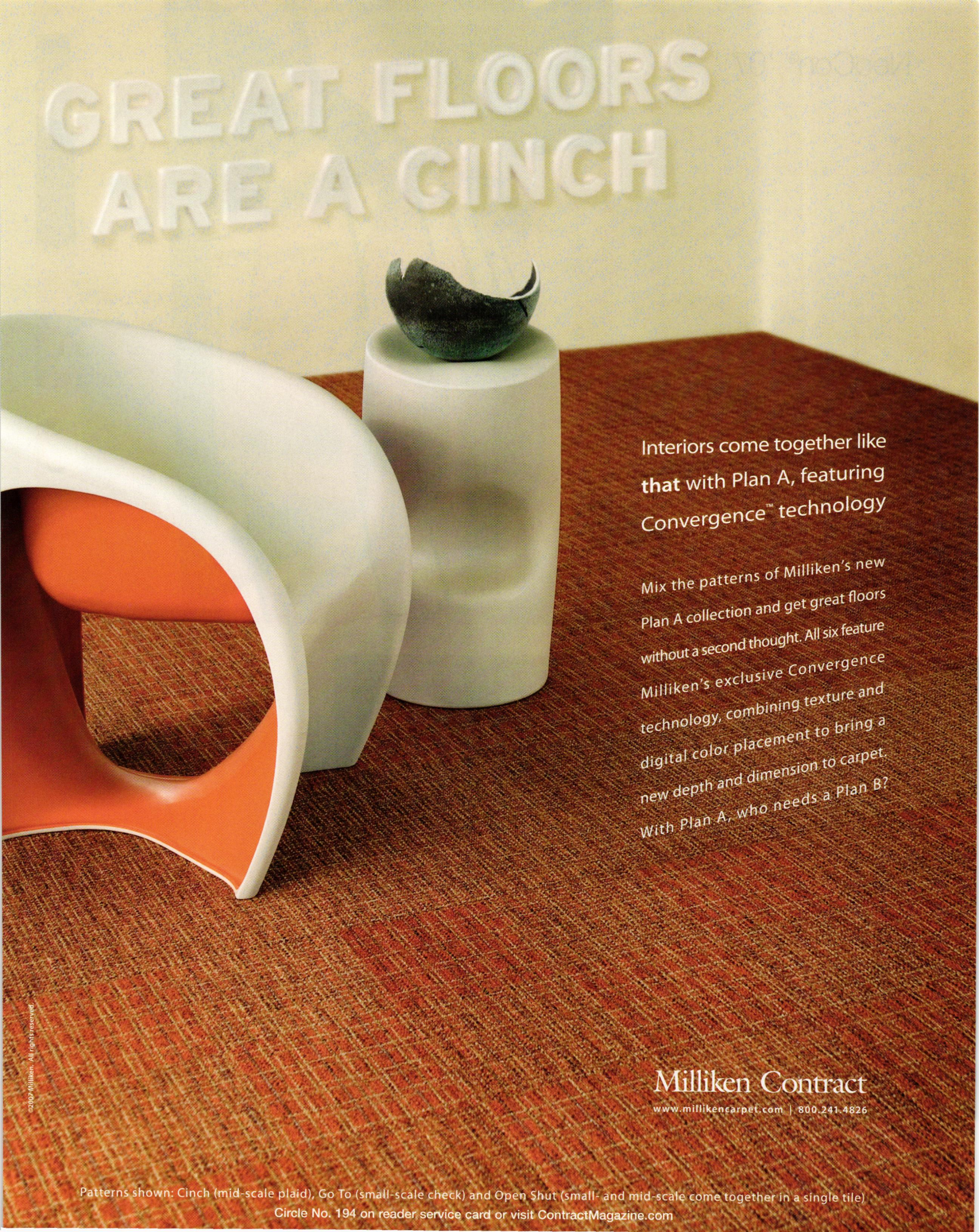


Best Large Showroom and Best of Show

The Best of Show Award and the Award for Showrooms Larger Than 3,000 sq. ft. were both presented to Milliken Carpet, designed by Q Studio. Photography by Christopher Barrett/Hedrich Blessing.

Best Small Showroom

The Award for Showrooms of 3,000 sq. ft. or Less was given to Antron, designed by Perkins+Will | Eva Maddox Branded Environments. Photo by Steve Hall, Hedrich Blessing Photography.


GREAT FLOORS
ARE A CINCH
Interiors come together like
that with Plan A, featuring
Convergence™ technology
Mix the patterns of Milliken's new
Plan A collection and get great floors
without a second thought. All six feature
Milliken's exclusive Convergence
technology, combining texture and
digital color placement to bring a
new depth and dimension to carpet.
With Plan A, who needs a Plan B?
Milliken Contract
www.millikencarpet.com | 800.241.4826
©2007 Milliken. All rights reserved.
Patterns shown: Cinch (mid-scale plaid), Go To (small-scale check) and Open Shut (small- and mid-scale come together in a single tile)
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Best Large Booth

The Award for Booths of 400 sq. ft. or Larger was awarded to 3Form, designed by Guillaume Martin and Jill Canales. Photo courtesy of 3Form.

Best Small Booth

The Award for Booths of Less Than 400 sq. ft. was awarded to Lutron, designed by E. Scott Denison. Photo courtesy of Lutron Electronics.

NeoCon® East

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October 17-18, 2007
The Baltimore Convention Center
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INSPIRING SOLUTIONS for the DESIGN and MANAGEMENT of the BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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Like the industry it reports and supports

fast moving, dynamic, restless, refreshing.

many reasons. many ways.

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Green + Design Conference and Expo is about combining green principles with utility, economy, practicality, and beauty. The inaugural Green + Design Conference and Expo will be the design industry's most comprehensive educational and trade event focusing on integrating the principles of sustainability into project design.

Four featured conference tracks:

Commercial Green Design

Hospitality Green Design

Residential Green Design

Retail Green Design

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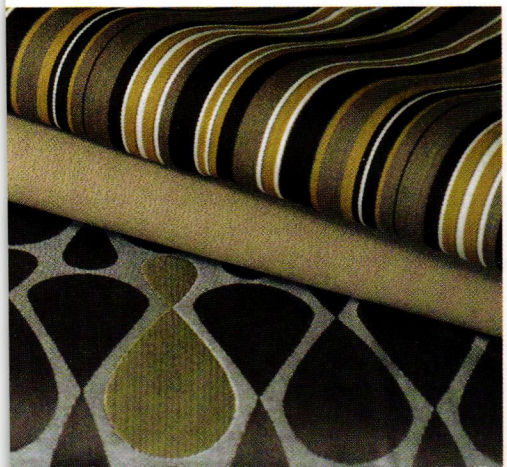
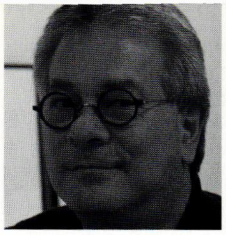


Royce Epstein
Associate / Senior
FF&E Specialist
RMJM Hillier
Philadelphia



Rick Focke
Senior Principal,
Design Director
HOK
New York

stacking chairs

Contract asks two designers to name and explain their preferred products

Moroso, Supernatural.
Circle No. 208

Emeco, 20-06.
Circle No. 209

Royce Epstein
RMJM Hillier

Moroso
Supernatural
www.moroso.it
Designed by Ross Lovegrove, this stack chair is very whimsical but takes on a different character depending on the color and the back style (solid or perforated). Its shape is very seductive and looks organic or otherworldly (hence the name "supernatural"). The chair is made from injection-molded fiberglass reinforced polyamide, a newer technology that allows for the refined and delicate looking frame while not compromising strength. It is very well priced, and it can also be used outdoors.

Emeco
20-06
Emeco.net
This aluminum chair was designed by Foster + Partners to suit contemporary interiors but also complement Emeco's mid-century modern heritage. It has just about the best spec I have seen for a stack chair: lightweight but extremely strong; a clean and slim profile; made from 80 percent recycled content; looks seamless with no exposed hardware; easy to maintain; has a lifetime warranty; and it's even fireproof. This chair will last many generations, which makes it a bargain and a great sustainable choice.

Barcelona Seating Collection
Elena
www.janehamleywells.com
A NeoCon® gold-award winner this year, Elena is very sculptural, looks great on all sides, and reminds me of a bird. It offers a very elegant solution to ganging (the side "flaps" nest together). It's made of polypropylene and a chrome steel frame, but you can get the frame in a zinc coating for outdoor use. It also comes with a whole family of other chair types, but the stack version is the most delightful.

Barcelona Seating Collection, Elena.
Circle No. 210

Rick Focke
HOK

Barcelona Seating Collection
Elena
www.janehamleywells.com
Very impressive—this chair is wonderfully simple and the lines flow elegantly. When ganged together the continued flow of lines is enhanced even more. It's very comfortable and comes with or without arms. Currently, it only comes in black or white finishes—which works for its aesthetics—however, hopefully one day some colored versions will come to the line.

Stylex Seating
Luna
www.stylexseating.com
Not only is Luna a stacking chair, but it's also a bar stool. The style is simple, and the use of pressed papers with a clear melamine finish makes this chair scratch-resistant. It can be seat or back upholstered, and the stacking height also is impressive.

Styling Seating, Luna.
Circle No. 211

ICF
Millibar
www.icfsource.com
This chair is very comfortable, probably due to the base seat and back composition of structural felt that is then upholstered. Well-designed aesthetically, Millibar comes in arm or armless versions to give clients choices, and the stacking height of seven to eight chairs is good.

ICF, Millibar.
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a case for cooperation

How one owner plus four architects and one project can equal success

By Charles Boschen

Engaging four award-winning architectural firms to design the core buildings for development of a new campus for a 220-year-old educational institution could be a recipe for design, construction, and operational disasters—unless the process is impeccably planned and tightly controlled. The Episcopal Academy (EA), a pre-kindergarten through 12 private school founded in 1785 with campuses located on Philadelphia's Main Line in Merion and Devon, Penn., did just that, with success due to the structured approach taken by the Academy's development manager, Brailsford and Dunlavey (B&D), a Washington, D.C.-based consulting firm. Still, working with four architects at the same time on one project was daunting.

In March 2002, EA decided it needed a development manager to oversee a master planning process being initiated at that time by Graham Gund Associates (now Gund Partnership), and it hired B&D. As the master plan developed, the school decided it needed educational facilities consisting of a lower school for Pre-K through fifth grade; a middle school for grades six through eight; an upper school for grades nine through 12; and a science center serving grades six through 12. Additionally, administration offices, a cafeteria, theater, and other support spaces would be housed in a campus center. There was also need for an athletic center and a chapel.

At the onset of planning, the chapel's design was unofficially set aside for EA alumnus Robert Venturi, as the realization of an EA chapel he designed in 1950 as his master's thesis for Princeton University School of Architecture. During the subsequent planning discussions, it became clear that EA didn't want to limit its building designs to one architect's vision and would consider multiple architects for the campus. However, there was little consensus on an architect or which design style would fit each building.

In an effort to incorporate the diverse creative interests, B&D formulated a strategy utilizing a local master architect to perform the construction documentation of the designs developed by each individual architect, thereby insuring some continuity among all buildings in their systems and equipment. Under this plan, individual architects would design a particular facility from concept, through schematic, and into design development, then turn the design over to the master architect for construction documentation and administration. With a local construction architect, B&D believed that EA could be assured of an architect with an intimate knowledge of Philadelphia's construction community, and via their office proximity, resolve issues expeditiously.

Once EA approved the concept, B&D began the larger and more difficult process of finding the right master architect. After narrowing the list of qualified architects with offices in the Philadelphia area to about 20 firms, B&D sent out RFPs designed to identify each firm's capabilities, history, number of offices, number of professionals, annual business volume, current project experience, and projected workload. From much discussion came six candidates to be interviewed and B&D developed additional criteria to compare them, including project approach, involvement of principals, fee, and several other specific criteria. The interview process yielded one firm: The Hillier Group (now RMJM Hillier), headquartered in Princeton, N.J., with a Philadelphia office.

Two other firms made such a positive impression that the Academy wanted each to be a part of the project. The Gund Partnership in Boston won the design of the campus center, while Bernard Cywinski of Philadelphia's Bohlin Cywinski Jackson won the design of the athletic center. In addition, Robert Venturi of Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, also of Philadelphia, was formally awarded the chapel design.

Lower School Rendering. Designed by RMJM Hillier.

To put all four parties on common ground, the Academy and B&D hosted a day-long design charrette to set the common goals, assign responsibilities, and explain the procedures and policies that B&D would use to keep all four groups focused. Under B&D's tutelage, the Academy developed a three-tiered review process for the design phase of the project. Individual project committees met regularly with each building's architectural team, and each project was then reviewed based on compliance to building program and budget. A development committee of the Board of Trustees acted as the overall governing body, meeting with the architectural teams as a whole and reviewing compliance to design guidelines and overall campus integration, as well as changes to the individual building programs or budgets.

This process, based on the series of standard procedures developed by B&D, has worked extremely well for the Academy and has avoided the many pitfalls inherent in an endeavor more complex than most. Currently, all five buildings are under construction. While the RMJM Hillier is the architect of record, the educational buildings, the campus center, the athletic center, and the chapel all have maintained the singular design integrity and personality instilled by the distinctively different design architects. The partnership between EA and B&D has resulted in a unique and inspired project, coordinating the creative genius of four different architects to achieve a collective goal: bringing a bold new campus to Philadelphia's Main Line that both reflects the Academy's traditions and values and meets the needs of the entire EA community. The campus is on schedule to open to students in August 2008.

Charles Boschen is senior project manager at Brailsford and Dunlavey, owner's representative for the Episcopal Academy Newtown Square Campus Project.

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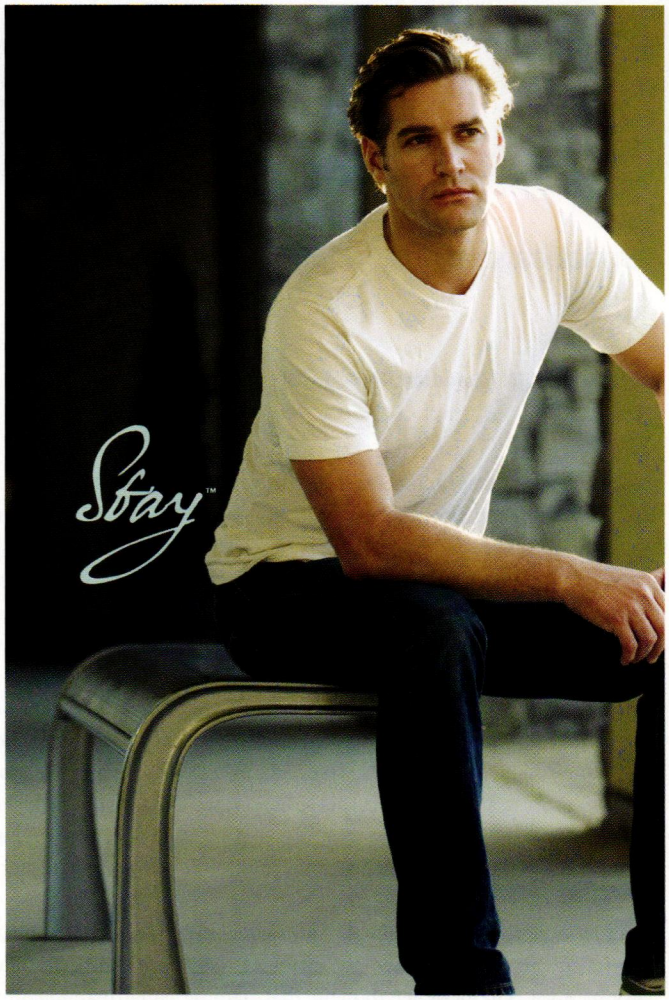

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protecting your design intent

Specifications ensure that a project's design integrity and intent are secured

By Michael D. Chambers FAIA, FCSI

Interior designers often refer to themselves as specifiers; however, very few effectively utilize the powerful procedures and processes inherent in the specification process. Designers already spend significant amounts of time and creative energy on their projects, but a bit more design time can significantly help to protect design intent in the field.

Lessons Learned

A number of years ago, a senior interior designer and a specifier worked on a large hospital project. The owner was intensely involved and worked closely with the designer in developing color and material palettes. In the course of the design process, a number of carpet selections were made along with coordinating colors and finishes. The carpets were specified by manufacturer and product number with several other manufacturers, but not products, listed as equals.

Carpet designs are copyrighted, and the low bidder turned out not to be the specified carpet. The owner was adamant that the bid process be open and competitive. The designer thought that naming equal manufacturers would provide an open specification. The specifier did not understand the issue until much too late in the process. The senior interior designer and senior project architect spent six months and $200,000 trying to get the low bidder to produce a carpet that the owner would accept. They filled rooms with rejected strike-offs and revised color palettes. Suffice it to say the owner was not pleased.

The moral of this story is that if the designer had offered the owner the top three carpet choices and color/finish palettes, much of the agony could have been avoided. Also, because the designer was not familiar with specification procedures other than selecting materials, a number of specification questions were not asked nor were procedural issues fully explored.

Communicating Quality

To most effectively accomplish the design concept and protect design intent, it is imperative to understand and use the quality control procedures in Division 01. These procedures allow the designer to stay in control of the review and approval processes that affect the design concept.

Construction documents are vital communication tools. In concert with the drawings, specifications provide complete and comprehensive communication of the design concept and intent. From a quality control point-of-view, specifications are highly enforceable in quality disputes. Drawings are graphic representations that show quantities, location, layout, relationships, and dimensions. None of those items have any qualitative value whatsoever. Conversely, specifications indicate quality standards, methods, materials, fabrication, and procedures, all of which are highly qualitative issues. Specifications are the only enforceable quality assurance portion of the construction documents.

Controlling Substitutions

One of the most frustrating aspects of a construction project is dealing with substitutions. Interestingly enough, most substitutions are directly related to poor specifications, inadequate product research, designer ignorance, or lack of enforceable procedures.

When developing a product specification, it is critical to ensure that the appropriate quality levels are specified and understood between competitive products. "Apples for apples" specifications are very hard to break by substitution. Designers must ensure that they understand the real technical issues of a product, not just the manufacturer's features and benefits. Selecting and specifying products by features and benefits often forces needless substitutions.

Specification/Section Format

The last thing most designers are interested in learning about is specification formats and procedures. However, there are powerful controls, procedures, and processes that designers can use to their advantage, helping them get the project built the way they envisioned it. Using standard specification formats and procedures has significant advantages for every interior design project. It provides standard locations for information, forces coordination of project requirements, reduces omissions and duplications, and allows critical project information to be easily located. The additional work it takes to stay in control and protect your design intent will be well worth the effort.

Michael D. Chambers FCSI FAIA CCS is technical director for SB Architects in San Francisco and principal of MCA Specifications, Construction Product Marketing Group.

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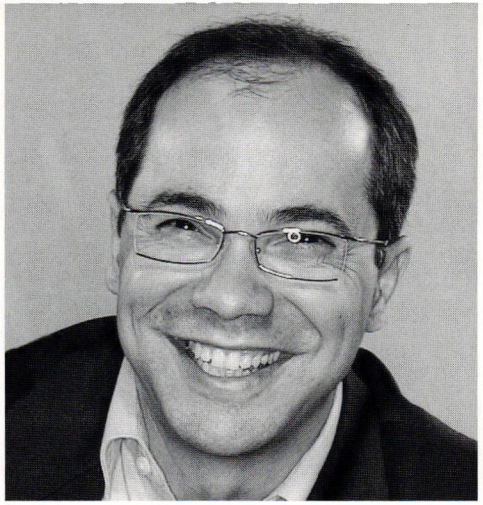

designers against the iPodization of society

By Antonio Larosa

I realized early in life—long before I went to design school—the importance that design has in people's lives. Designing original greeting cards for friends in middle school was my way to lift other kids' spirits. Designing places to sit, eat, and sleep away from cold and muddy campgrounds as a scout was a fun challenge to keep us campers happy. Designing a new puppet theater for a town that had been completely destroyed by an earthquake helped to cheer up the town's children. All these actions had something in common other than simply making people happy: They were increasing interpersonal communication. Somehow, I had the feeling that one day I was going to be in the "making-people-cheerful-with-my-ideas" business, but I did not know yet that the profession was called "design."

A few years ago on a business trip to New York, I took a taxi to the airport and other than to ask my destination and tell me the fare, the driver did not say one word to me. At the airport many people seated at the gates stared blank-faced at the giant flat-screen television, while others were absorbed watching movies on their portable DVD players. Many were talking on cell phones; some worked on laptops or busied themselves with PDAs. And others were occupied tuning out everyone with their iPods.

Oh well, I thought, I have a five-hour flight and someone on the plane will want to have a conversation about life, work, or current affairs. Unfortunately, I was dead wrong. Some designer had the brilliant idea to equip every seat on the plane with an individual TV offering a selection of 30 channels. There was no need for conversation during the flight either.

As I checked into my hotel, I realized that I had spent nearly the entire day being around thousands of people, yet the only human interaction I had was a few words spoken to a half-attentive person. I became seriously concerned about the future of our society. People are so focused on global warming, recycling, and terrorism, but they do not realize there is another fundamental human need being threatened here. We are losing basic interpersonal communication skills. People are so busy gabbing on their cells, texting, or popping into Web chat rooms that we are losing the ability or desire to say a few words to the person standing next to us. Many are fine with talking to strangers over the Internet, yet the thought of speaking to someone in person turns them mute.

I wondered what caused people to not want to interact any longer. Initially, I blamed this trend on the high-tech gadgets that keep us so screen-focused. Then, I realized that even before the hand-held electronic era, personal interactions were already being derailed by bad designs of public spaces and furniture. Some designers create gadgets to help us avoid talking to each other. Others design buildings and cities that keep us from interacting by eliminating or minimizing public spaces. Even the interiors of cars and planes now maximize our own personal comforts, thus helping us to avoid interacting with other human beings.

I realized that designers can be blamed for the lack of relationships between people and for the lack of communication in society in general. Designers are failing to do what design is all about: We should strive to make people happy and comfortable in their environments, yes. But we also must take care that if the level of comfort is reached only by isolating people from one another, the interaction element that is so essential to keeping us human is suffering. And it's a shame.

Perhaps my theory is flawed, but I am certain that designers can make the world a better place. I definitely believe designers can help reverse the "my space" trend by designing better public spaces and furniture that foster relationships instead isolation. Good design can encourage people to want to interact. I hope more designers are going to follow this direction.

Think of the buildings designed by Rem Koolhaas or Frank Gehry: They have a power over people. Like giant magnets, these structures attract people to come closer, investigate, and talk about what they see. Once I was standing by Gehry's Experience Music Project building in Seattle, and a stranger next to me smiled and said, "I don't know what it's all about, but this stuff [the building]—it's almost better than rock 'n' roll." There we were, two strangers striking up a conversation over a building. I thought it was wonderful, and I started hoping that one day good design might just bring people back together again—just like rock 'n' roll did 60 years ago.

Antonio Larosa is an independent designer/consultant, living in Phoenix and working for architectural firms and manufacturers in the United States and Italy. He studied architecture at the Milan Polytechnic, Italy, city planning at the University of Calabria, and archaeology at the University of Milan. Tony@LarosaDesign.com

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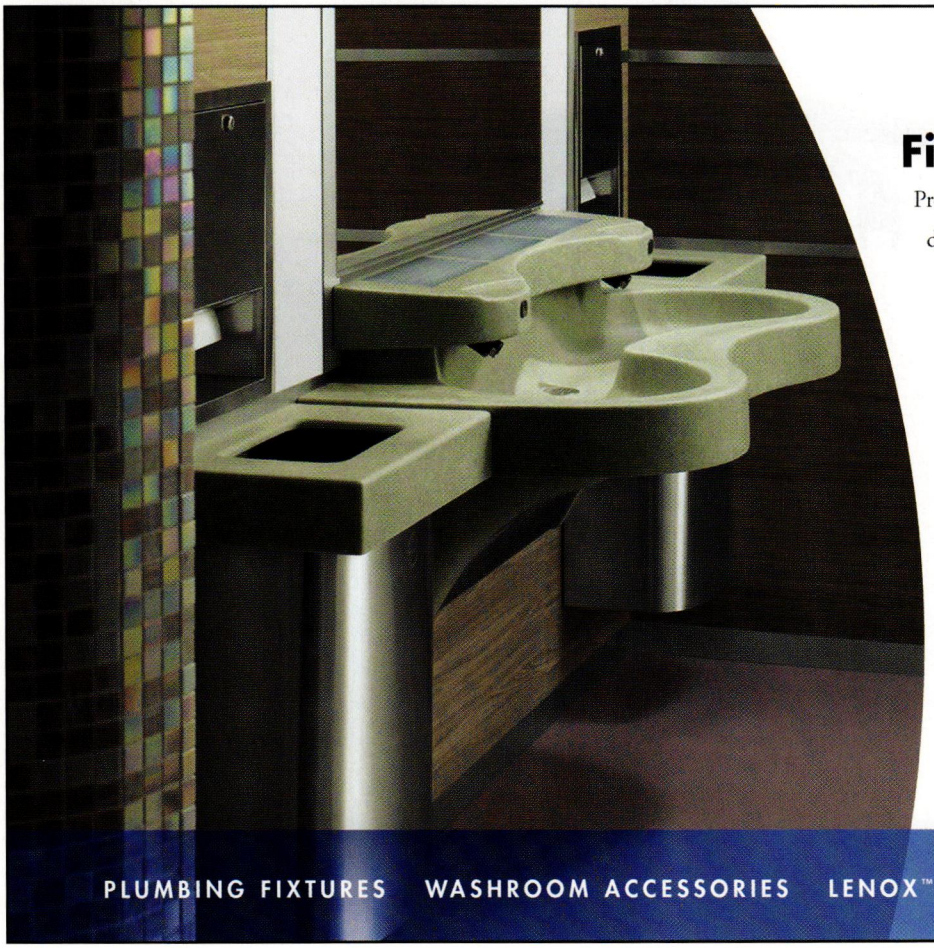

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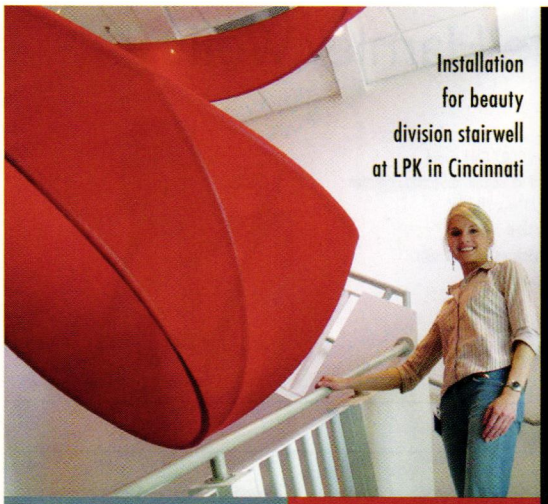

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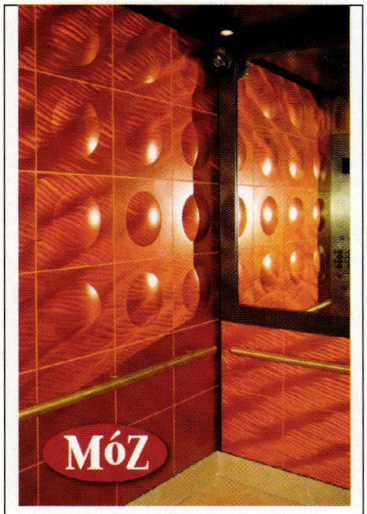

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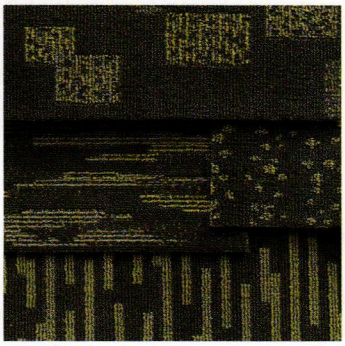

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*Other options: no arms; sled base; upholstered seat; casters; pedestal base. Ganging; stacking; indoor or outdoor use.

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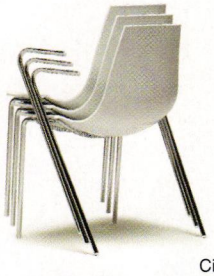

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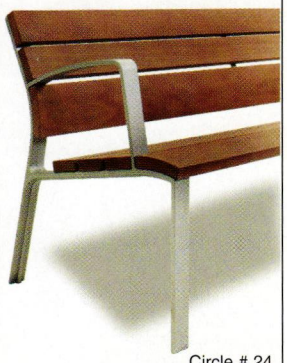

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SPLINTER

SPLINTER winner Best of NeoCon 2007 Silver award
DESIGN BY Matthew Kroeker for Jane Hamley Wells
DIMENSIONS 30.2"h x 27.0"w x 21.5"d
MATERIALS Teak/stainless steel

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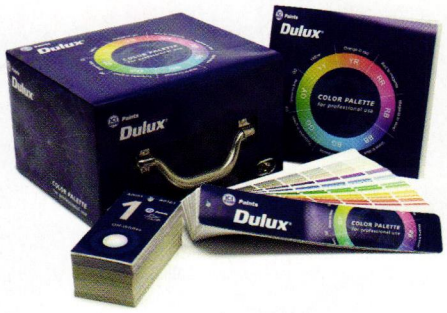

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Manufacturer	Reader Service No.	Page No.
20-20 Technologies	124	36
3Form	42	43
Agati	13	104
Allsteel	90	35
Antron	170	12-13
Architex	180	127
Armstrong World Industries	71	2-3
Bentley Prince Street	50	4-5
Bluworld of Water	160	33
B & N	88	16
Bradley	73	170
Brayton	22	59
Carnegie	75	151
Carolina Business Furniture	93	19
C.F. Stinson	76	129
Chemetal	49	34
Contract Connected.com	–	160
Contract Network.com	–	52
Crossvile	143	53
Dauphin	8	28
Davis Avea Table Series	11	21
Davis TIX Office	38	143
Designweave	12	30
Dietiker Switzerland	70	6-7
DuPont Corian	169	37
F C I	98	27
Garrett Leather	44	39
Geiger	162	49
Global	154	65
Green & Design Expo	174	161
Harden	19	38
Harmonic Environments	33	68
Harter	51	9
Haworth	125	123
HD Boutique 2007	189	26
Humanscale	79	169
ICI Paints Dulux	134, 30	32, 172
Intellaspace	146	38
Interiors Awards	–	33A-33B
IoA Heathcare	127	153
Jane Hamley Wells	20, 21	172
J&J Commercial	94	167
Joel Berman Glass	26	173
Johnsonite	153	45
K I	25	31
Kimball Office	18	71
K.R. Moeller	184	145
Krug	142	147
LaminArt	150	29
Landscape Form	135, 24	165, 172
Lees Carpet	64	cover 2-pg 1
Lonseal	86	67
Lumicor	177	173
Luna Textiles	176	131
Luxe Surfaces	161	21
Mannington	104	17
McDonald DuVall Design	52	171
Milliken	194	157
modularArts®	156	40
The Mohawk Group – Karastan Contract	66	176-177
The Mohawk Group – Synergy Collection	27	172
Moz Design	23	172
Multi-Housing World 2007	185	175
NeoCon® East	37	159
NeoCon® IIDEX	188	121
Paoli	81	18
Rejuvenation	197	48
Shaw Contract Group	110	133
Sherwin-Williams	35	47
Skyline Design	2	14
Stylex	85	41
Tandus	181	10-11
Tarkett	158	135
Three H Manufacturing	28	22
Trade Only Design Library	187	42
Tuohy	103	139
Vecta	150	141
Virco	121	25
Watson Furniture	41	15
Wolf Gordon	155	23
Zeftron	80	Back Cover

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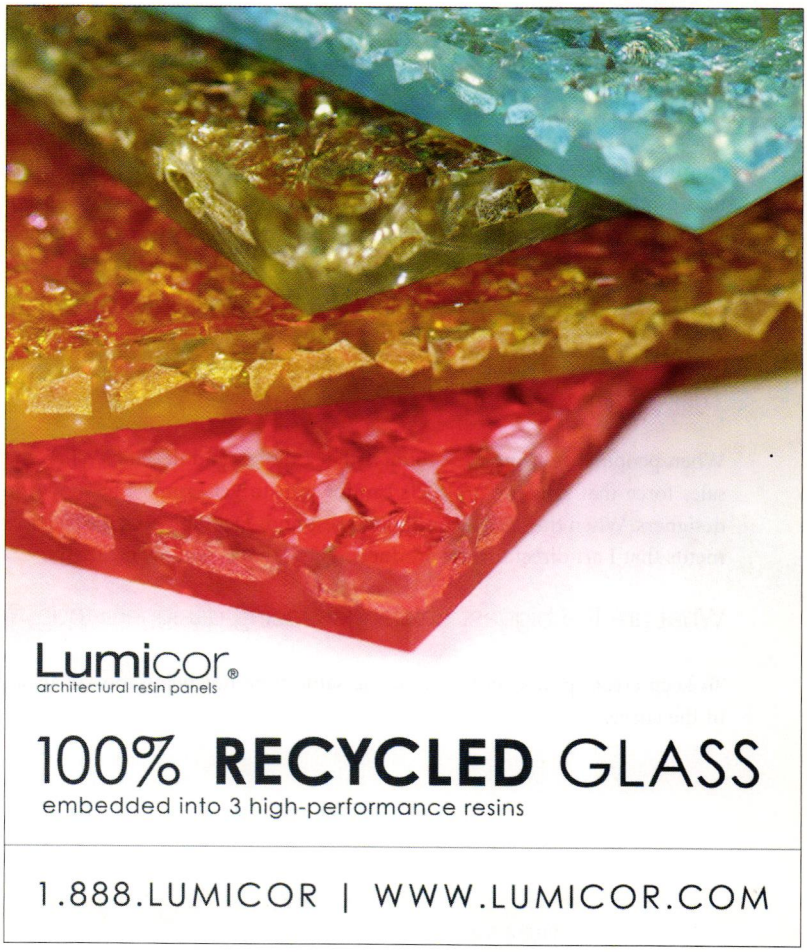

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Patty Madden

Title

Creative Director, Patty Madden Inc.

Education

Parsons School of Design and Fort Lauderdale Art Institute

Notable projects

Wallcovering collection books—Etruscan, Bacara, Etchings, Anthology, Spline, Opus, Quicksilver, Urban Organics, Flip, Inscriptions, Refractions.

What do you consider to be your greatest professional achievement?

The creation of my new products, for that moment, when they are completed and introduced into the marketplace is like giving birth. Subsequently, the next product that I create seems to feel equal or better. It is the same feeling that our clients must experience with their design projects; their latest is their best. I think all creative people strive for excellence with every job they do. As a professional, I look for voids in the marketplace and attempt to fill them with products that designers want.

What is the most fulfilling part of your job?

When people love using the products that I design and develop. When the sales force that sells my products cannot wait to get samples to show the designers. When the design community responds favorably to the advertisements that I art direct for my products. These things fuel my creativity.

What are the biggest challenges facing designers today?

To keep creating new looks but at the same time not being too far ahead of the curve.

What is the best thing you've learned in the past 10 years?

Pay very close attention to detail, otherwise things have a way of coming back to haunt you.

What advice would you give to A&D students or those just starting out in the field?

Set goals for yourself. Even if you hit roadblocks, don't give up. Be flexible because sometimes you think that there is only one path to reach your goal, but sometimes there are many—which may include changing direction because it turns out that you can use your skills in a more creative venue.

Another thing: I believe that you can be the most talented person out there, but you need to get people to pay attention, and sometimes that means starting at the bottom and working your way up. This is exactly how I got started. It doesn't matter at the end of the day where you went to school, what your grades were, etc., unless you are willing to be present and needed. Woody Allen said it best: "Eighty percent of success is showing up." Make yourself necessary. It helps to be like a sponge and absorb the positive energy around you. But most of all to listen and learn.

How do you foresee the future of design changing?

I like to look to the past when I create for the future. Commercial spaces allow designers to create the most edgy environments of all. My job is to look carefully and learn about what type of projects are being constructed and to try to visualize what type of wallcoverings, upholsteries, and finishes could be used in those spaces to enhance and complement them. I don't want my products to compete with the design, but rather to accent the spaces. I believe that the commercial designers are mostly moving in a contemporary and futuristic direction. I want to be moving along with them, creating new fresh looking products that will add something unique to those spaces.

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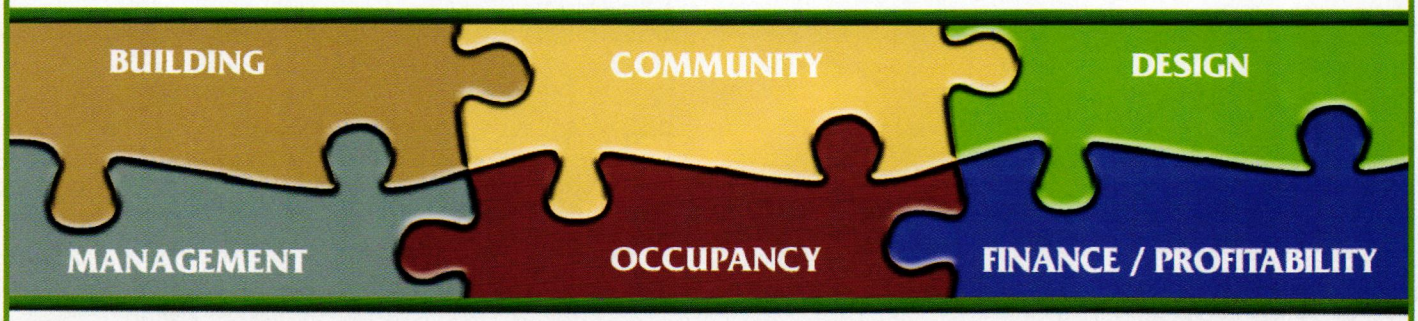

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